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MARYLAND

*Historical Magazine*



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*Founded 1844*

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# MARYLAND

## *Historical Magazine*

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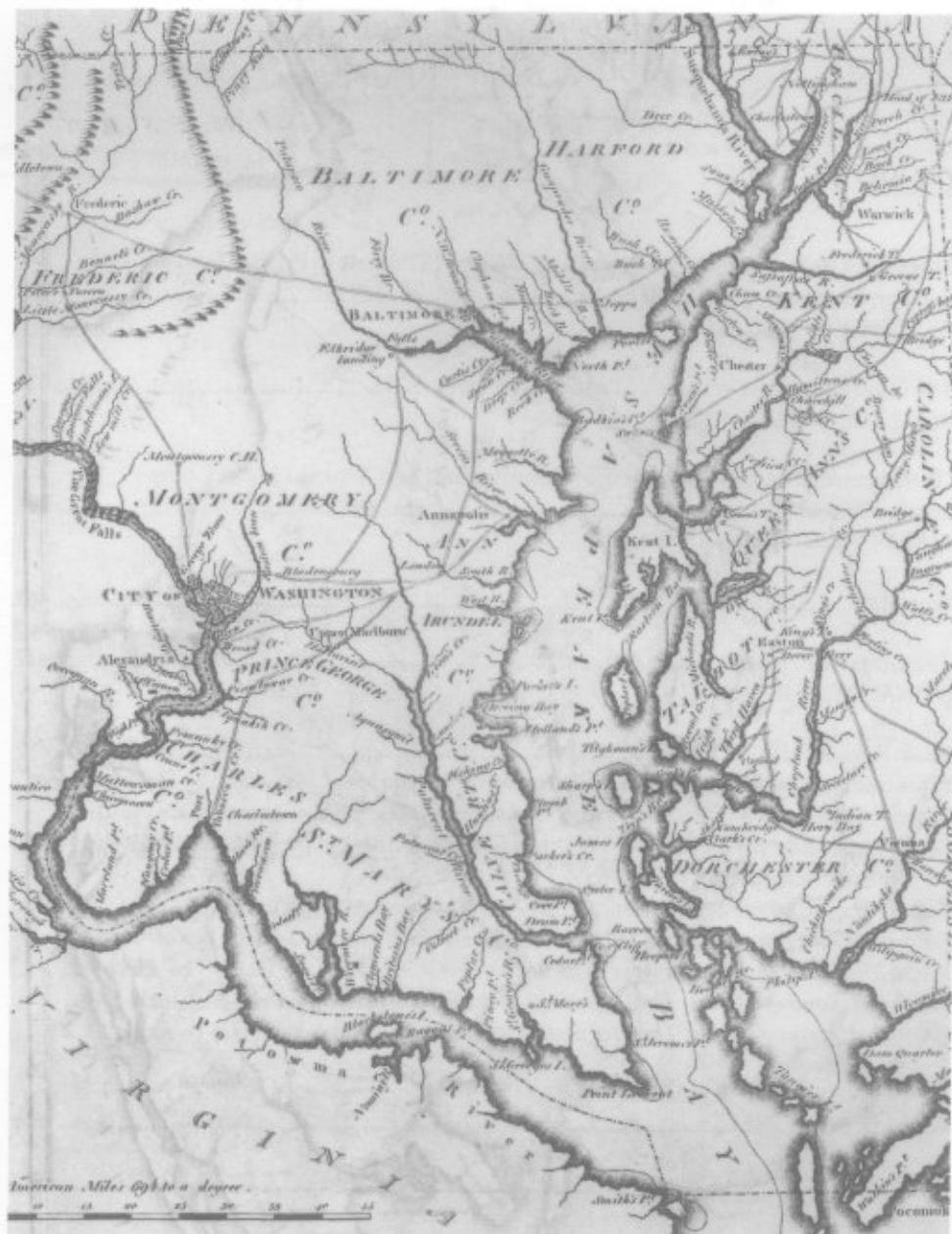
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*Cover: Charleston-born artist Gabrielle de Vaux Clements (1858-1949) studied at Cornell University, the Pennsylvania Academy of the Arts in Philadelphia, and the Julian Studio in Paris and later taught at the Bryn Mawr School for girls in Baltimore. Primarily a muralist, Miss Clements and her friend, Ellen D. Hale, leased an apartment in Baltimore one winter in the late 1920s and created a series of etchings that included this Mount Vernon Scene.*



Maryland, 1795, by Samuel Lewis. The rapidly growing population of Prince George's County forced the legislature to create Frederick County from its western lands in 1749. The division left large numbers of the poor, elderly, and infirm in Prince George's, adding to that county's social burden. (Maryland Historical Society.)

# From Poor Relief to the Poorhouse: The Response to Poverty in Prince George's County, Maryland, 1710–1770

ZACHARY RYAN CALO

In 1671 the Maryland legislature empowered justices of the county courts to levy a tax to provide relief to poor residents. Though many counties had begun distributing poor relief allowances during the previous decade,<sup>1</sup> this act formally laid out the method of poor relief that courts throughout the colony would utilize for the next hundred years. By examining the people who received relief and the mechanism designed to administer it, this study explores the emergence of Maryland's poor relief system during the eighteenth century, as well as the factors that, by 1770, forced many counties to abandon the traditional system in favor of a new approach to handling the poor through almshouses and workhouses.

The system of outdoor relief founded in 1671 effectively provided for the poor in Maryland for nearly a century. Because the poor remained small in number throughout much of this period, the system did not need to be elaborate or extensive in order to reach needy members of the community. In fact, with a minimal number of petitioners going before the court each year, close interaction between those seeking financial assistance and the justices entrusted with the responsibility of distributing funds was inevitable. As I will suggest, the requirement that people directly petition the court had shortcomings and might have been a stigmatizing prospect for some. In no way, however, did the poor relief system attempt to humiliate or marginalize the poor. To the contrary, the system complemented the values of the community by providing a mechanism for identifying the most destitute and providing them with pensions they could use to continue living their lives in the way they deemed best.

A dramatic series of transformations that manifested themselves in the early 1760s rapidly undermined the effectiveness of the traditional poor relief system, leading to the widespread use of poorhouses. One change was the gradual increase in population that forced the relief system to evaluate the petitions of

*Mr. Calo is a graduate student in American history at the University of Pennsylvania. This paper won the undergraduate essay contest in 1997 when the author was a student at the Johns Hopkins University.*

more people. An even more significant development was the tremendous growth in pensioners who received relief for long periods of time. This decreased the turnover rate, forcing the poor relief system to support more pensioners at a high cost. At the same time these internal changes were taking place, broad social and economic trends were limiting opportunities for financial advancement and also creating a class of landless vagrants who roamed throughout the colony looking for a means of survival. County leaders viewed vagrants as a troublesome and threatening group. However, because able-bodied beggars were not eligible for public relief, no means existed to control or provide for them effectively. As a result, many counties began to petition the legislature for the right to construct workhouses that could confine beggars and provide a way for them to support themselves through labor. With poorhouses and workhouses designed both to confine the able-bodied and to provide for the deserving poor, a noticeable transition in attitudes towards poverty emerged. Whereas the old system of relief treated poverty as a pitiable condition worthy of public support, workhouses and poorhouses encouraged the community to view the poor as shameful and bothersome people who had to be set apart from the rest of society. When determining how to address peoples' financial needs and circumstances, counties no longer considered seriously the once pivotal distinctions between the deserving and undeserving poor.

Though this work utilizes sources from throughout Maryland, it relies primarily on records from Prince George's County that extensively detail the operation of the poor relief system. In addition, the county's social diversity makes it an ideal point of focus. With a population comprising a variety of people—rich and poor, landowners and tenants, slaveowners and nonslaveowners, Anglicans, Presbyterians, and Roman Catholics—Prince George's was something of an eighteenth-century Maryland in miniature.

### The Operation of Public Poor Relief in Prince George's County

Though the objectives were similar, Maryland's poor relief system differed from those in England and elsewhere in the American colonies because of its modest size and exclusive use of the courts instead of the church. Unlike Virginia, for example, which organized its poor relief system at the parish level, Maryland counties uniformly used the courts as the sole mechanism for administering public relief and gave tax-supported parishes no official role in caring for the needy. The courts, however, had not always been the sole provider of public poor relief in Maryland. During the later years of the seventeenth century, many parishes were involved in providing for young orphans, and for a time, both Charles and Somerset Counties experimented with granting parishes significant poor relief responsibilities. The initiatives in Charles and

## ACTS

PASSED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE PROVINCE OF  
MARYLAND, 1694-1728 (NOT PREVIOUSLY PRINTED)

### An Additionall Act to the Act of Religion.

Be it Enacted by the King and Queens most Excellent Maj<sup>ties</sup> by and with the advice and Consent of this present Generall Assembly and the authority of the same that in every respective Parish within this Province whereunto any Minister is or shall hereafter be appointed by his Excell<sup>cy</sup> the Governour of this Province for the tyme being such Minister as aforesaid shall be added to the Vestry of that Parish as one of the vestrymen thereof, and if any of the vestrymen of that Parish as aforesaid shall not appear att the tyme and place when and where such Vestry shall be held, he or they so omitting their duty as aforesaid shall be fyned by such and so many of the said Vestry as shall be mett att the tyme and place appointed according to their discretion not exceeding the sume of one hundred pounds of Tobaccoe (the Minister only excepted) to be employed towards the use of the Poore Which said Fyne shall be recovered by the Vestry in the County Courts where such person or persons shall reside by Bill Plaintiff or Informacōn wherein noe Essoyne Proteccōn or wager of Law to be allowed :

*The 1692 Act for Religion provided for the care of the colony's "worthy poor." (Maryland State Archives.)*

Somerset were derived from a provision in the 1692 Act for Religion that allowed parishes to use for poor relief the revenue raised from fining individuals for breaking the Sabbath. With revenue situated in the parishes, the church was seemingly an ideal vehicle for distributing payments to the poor. These arrangements, though, quickly proved to be inadequate, and soon after the turn of the century county courts across the colony assumed total control of the poor relief system. This transition may be explained by the fact that most parishes, still in the initial stages of development, were preoccupied with finding ministers, selecting vestries and churchwardens, and building churches. Because such parishes lacked the capacity to handle efficiently the burden of dealing with the poor, it proved more expedient to have the administratively stable courts handle it.<sup>2</sup>

As with the English poor laws, Maryland's relief system was designed to provide the necessities of life only to those indigent people whom society deemed deserving of assistance—children, the elderly, and the sick.<sup>3</sup> Unlike the highly

complex system that evolved in England, however, the relief system in Maryland accomplished this objective without having to rely on an elaborate set of arrangements. Because Maryland had both a small population and a small number of poor, the colony's relief system was a simple one, thus permitting counties to run poor relief operations entirely through the courts. The simplicity of the process made it possible for anyone interested in obtaining relief simply to present a petition at one of the court's sessions in March, June, August, or November.

While the process of petitioning for relief was simple, it could nevertheless be a trying experience. Because there were no established criteria for determining who was eligible for relief, the justices alone had authority to rule if a petitioner was sufficiently in need to collect a pension. Petitioners, therefore, had to convince the court that their situation warranted public assistance. No doubt, this arrangement encouraged some petitioners to embellish their testimonies in order to emphasize the desperateness of their situation. Allan Kulikoff, however, overstates the point in writing that people seeking aid had to "debase themselves . . . by relating tales of woe in the most servile manner."<sup>4</sup> Considering that in a small-sized community like Prince George's the justices knew many of the people who came before the court, it is doubtful that petitioners typically had to act in an exaggeratedly obsequious manner to persuade the court of their need.

Because only the court had authority to determine if a petitioner should receive relief, the justices did not have to defend their decision when they rejected a request for assistance. For petitioners who failed to persuade the justices of their need for support, the court records list only the petitioner's name, a brief description of his or her circumstances, and the word "Rejected." These individuals had to find an alternate means of subsistence until the following court session, when they could again seek public relief from the county.

For those petitioners who were able to convince the justices to provide them with support, relief could come in several forms. The most common practice was to give the petitioner a block sum of currency that the court based on the effectiveness of the petition, the testimonies of family members and friends, the amount of previous relief payments, and the perceived needs of the petitioner.<sup>5</sup> The amount of these payments was not standardized and differed widely among recipients. Some pensions the court provided were rather sizeable; in other cases they were hardly sufficient to provide even the most basic necessities of life. The court records, in fact, detail numerous occasions in which pensioners returned to the court several months after receiving their annual payment to contend that the amount was inadequate. After considering the pensioner's argument, the justices not uncommonly conceded that the existing allowance was insufficient and adjusted the payment accordingly. One such incident occurred when Thomas Bushnell, who received a pension of two hundred pounds of tobacco in early 1730, returned to the court in November claiming that the sum was so small

that he could not "live on it." Upon hearing his petition, the court increased his payment to five hundred pounds of tobacco.<sup>6</sup>

In most instances, pensioners determined for themselves how to use their relief payment. Based on their needs and circumstances, people could choose to spend it on food, clothing, medicine, or shelter. In other situations, however, the court designated poor relief funds for a specific use, the most common of which was medical care. Though the number of destitute individuals who received medical attention was small, those who did require help from a doctor were often very ill or disabled, making their treatments extensive and costly. Because such people could not afford to pay for treatment, counties arranged to have one or two doctors available to provide medical care at the public's expense. These doctors worked for the county and were responsible for tending to all patients for whom the court authorized publicly funded medical support. The county's doctors did not receive a flat salary for their work; rather, the court reimbursed them at each session for all of the expenses they incurred while caring for patients who received poor relief. Between 1710 and 1768, only once did the Prince George's court not use official county doctors to care for a patient. In this case, according to the 1741 tax levy, the county offered nine thousand pounds of tobacco, a large amount totaling 20 percent of the entire poor relief budget for that year, "to anyone who will undertake the cure of Mary Kennett."<sup>7</sup> Most likely, the justices only resorted to such drastic measures when they had an extremely ill patient who required extensive care and attention beyond what the county doctors had the time or skill to handle.

While most expenditures marked for a pre-determined purpose covered medical care, petitioners sometimes requested personalized forms of relief tailored specifically to their needs. One such incident occurred when Matthew Farrel, who claimed to have "had the misfortune of breaking his thigh which has so much disabled him that he cannot walk about to pursue his trade," asked the court to provide him with money to purchase a horse so he could more easily transport himself.<sup>8</sup> The justices rejected this request, but they were not always disinclined towards the idea of using poor relief funds to accommodate special circumstances. William Needham, for example, was a blind man who had "taken lately a journey into the springs upwards in Virginia and . . . received some small comfort there from concerning my sight which for many years I have lost," but "being poor and miserable and no man to help me was forced to return without a complete cure." Convinced that another trip to the springs could, "by the blessing of God," cure him of his malady, Needham in 1746 asked the court to grant him enough funding to return. The court honored Needham's request, probably hoping that by recovering his sight he would no longer need to rely on the county for support, as he had done since 1735. The court records of 1747, though, reveal that Needham's second journey to the therapeutic springs

brought "little help," and left him no alternative but to continue depending on an annual pension until his death in 1749.<sup>9</sup>

As with those petitioners who requested aid for a specific need, providing for county dependents who were particularly old or disabled often required more than simply granting a pension they could use for any general purpose. Because these people tended to be incapacitated in ways that left them unable to handle the demands of everyday life, they required constant supervision and assistance. To provide for pensioners in these situations, the court typically relied on a procedure called assigning, in which the court placed the pensioner in a private home where the owner could act as custodian.<sup>10</sup> The court provided the person who assumed this responsibility with a block sum of money to cover all expenses associated with housing, feeding, clothing, and meeting the medical needs of the indigent border. The percentage of poor relief recipients the court assigned varied from year to year, ranging from 21 to 48 percent. Despite the fluctuation, as long as the number of people requiring this type of supervised assistance did not become too burdensome, the practice of assigning to private homes provided a relatively simple and economically efficient way to meet the needs of the most destitute.<sup>11</sup> Though it was more expensive for Prince George's County to assign a poor relief recipient than to provide her or him with a pension, the added cost was an effective way for the county to provide for the most dependent segments of its population.

While the court was typically responsible for assigning people, poor relief recipients sometimes also assumed the responsibility of finding someone to care for them. Edward Willoughbey, for example, told the court in November 1756 that he had been "very old and . . . for many years . . . unable to maintain" himself and also, having lost a "foot by frost," was "often lame for many days together" and asked whether the court would "be pleased to allow such a pensionary subsistence to maintain [myself] in indigence, age and lameness as may induce some hospitable person to entertain [me] during the remains of comfortable life."<sup>12</sup> Elizabeth Linton and Joan Bishop made similar remarks when they petitioned the court in 1750. Linton contended that "she doubts the allowance you were pleased to make last year, will not induce any person to take care of [me],"<sup>13</sup> while Bishop maintained that "your worships have been pleased to deem your petitioner an object of publick compassion and grant [me] a pension . . . for many years . . . and therefore [I pray] that your worships will make some addition to the said allowance and such as may induce some hospitable person to entertain [me]."<sup>14</sup> The statements of Willoughbey, Linton, and Bishop indicate that needy pensioners could not always depend on the court to assign them, but rather in some cases, had to find someone who was willing to provide the necessary services in return for their poor relief allowance. Finding a caretaker apart from the court, however, was quite difficult. Unless a poor relief recipi-

ent had family or friends who could provide lodging and assistance, few community residents were willing to risk losing money by taking in an indigent whose pension might not adequately compensate them for high maintenance costs. Poor relief recipients needed a relatively large pension to "induce" someone to take them into their home and provide care.

Why the court assigned some people to private homes and not others is not always evident. No doubt, certain decisions, which in retrospect appear capricious and cold-hearted, were actually based on a clear evaluation of the pensioners' needs and the court's resources. Whether this was the case with Willoughbey, Linton, and Bishop cannot be determined from the records. However, examining the court's assignment procedure provides a greater understanding of why the poor relief system did not permit all qualified individuals to be placed into a private home. Such an analysis demonstrates that while the court had the power to influence who was assigned, the interplay of several other factors made their authority over this process far from absolute.

Available records indicate that the court used an auction-like procedure to place poor relief recipients with caretakers. This auctioning system did not involve multiple people vying for the right to care for a particular pensioner, but it undoubtedly involved discussion between the court and potential caretakers about how much compensation the court should provide. Decisions about the rate of payment were critical for both parties. Because the justices had limited resources with which to work, they had to exercise prudence in determining how many pensioners they could assign and how much money could be allocated for them. Receiving adequate payment was equally important for the caretakers, primarily so they could be certain to cover all expenses involved in caring for an indigent boarder, but also because acting as a caretaker was potentially a lucrative endeavor. Despite the potential for profit, people of lesser financial means did not become actively involved in caring for assigned individuals, largely because the possible monetary gain did not adequately compensate them for the time and energy needed to supervise carefully a sick or elderly individual. On numerous occasions people of modest means requested funding from the court to assist in the care of a sick or aged friend or family member. Many pensioners who were with a caretaker, however, did not have the opportunity to be in the home of relatives or close friends. Rather, year after year, caretakers were made up of well-to-do citizens who had the resources, servants, and free time to care for indigents. While these wealthy caretakers provided an important service to the community, the motivation of many appears not to have been a strong sense of civic duty but the desire for profit.

Because clerks sometimes recorded only the assignment of a pensioner and did not indicate to whom he or she was assigned, the identity and social status of many caretakers cannot be known. Nevertheless, the names of people of wealth

and status appear repeatedly among those in the records, making it probable that such people maintained a large proportion of assigned pensioners. There are two indications that the wealthy were particularly involved in caring for assigned poor relief recipients. First, during the early part of the eighteenth century, people carrying the title of colonel, major, or captain, which denoted a position of importance within the militia, had many indigents assigned to them.<sup>15</sup> Second, people who at some point during their life served as a justice on the Prince George's court, a prominent position generally reserved for those of wealth and influence within the community, frequently acted as caretakers. Often, the court assigned indigents to former justices as well as to people who not yet begun their tenure on the court.<sup>16</sup> Even more common, however, acting justices accepted assigned indigents.<sup>17</sup>

Payments given to caretakers for their services were, on average, larger than the relief payments given to poor relief recipients who were not assigned. Whether a pensioner was provided for in the home of a family member or a prominent and wealthy member of the community, the cost of maintaining assigned indigents was consistently higher, as they tended to represent the most needy of all poor relief recipients. Caring for people in such conditions required more and costlier involvement from the court. Financial agreements made with caretakers were further complicated because, unlike pensions given directly to poor relief recipients for acquiring necessities such as food and clothing, the compensatory payments provided to caretakers probably took into account the time and effort involved in attending to a poor boarder. Though there is no direct evidence to support this assertion, the high cost of assigning indigents, coupled with the fact that caretakers performed an important service only a few people in the community were willing or able to undertake, suggests that the court had to offer inducements for people to accept the burden. Furthermore, as discussed above, a small group of wealthy citizens consistently received many of the poor the court assigned. This fact alone does not establish that potential profits motivated the wealthy to become caretakers; however, if the court indeed compensated caretakers for more than just the material expenses incurred while watching over assigned pensioners, the potential for citizens to benefit financially by assuming responsibility for several indigents was no doubt a reality. By taking advantage of economies of scale and saving money on clothing, supplies, and duplicated services, the profit margin could increase as a caretaker assumed responsibility for more indigents. Viewed from this perspective, the decision of affluent residents to accept numerous assigned pensioners appears to have been part of an effort to establish small-scale for-profit poorhouses.

Without the possibility of profit, the system of assigning probably could not have endured. Unless one was caring for a close friend or relative, no incentive existed for investing the immense effort needed to care for an indigent. However, while the profit motive kept the system functioning, it also left open the

possibility that some of the most impoverished in the community would not receive the assistance they needed. Because the practice of assigning pensioners worked on incentive and not coercion, the ability of the court to assign a particular poor person ultimately depended on the willingness of private citizens to take people into their homes. As a result, although the court could advance a person's chances of finding a caretaker by offering greater monetary compensation, there was no guarantee that someone would be interested in attending to that person at the proposed rate. For example, if potential caretakers viewed an especially sick or aged petitioner as presenting too great a financial risk, or if the court was unable to agree with a caretaker on how much compensation should be provided, then the indigent, who might well be in need of supervised assistance, could lose the opportunity to be assigned. Based on the relative scarcity of cases such as those involving Willoughbey, Linton, and Bishop, the court appears to have been generally successful in placing those pensioners it deemed worthy of additional expense. But because the poor relief system was unable, either structurally or financially, to guarantee a caretaker to all deserving pensioners, some needy people were undoubtedly left without adequate care.

From this assessment, it is evident that there were cases in which factors outside the court's control prohibited the justices from assisting a pensioner in the way they desired. One can, for example, attribute the inability of deserving people like Edward Willoughbey, who had spent fifteen consecutive years on the poor relief rolls, and Joan Bishop, who was one of the most needy people in Prince George's County for more than two decades, to find caretakers to reasons other than the justices simply deciding they were not worthy of being assigned. In some cases, however, the court appeared to make little effort to provide help. One such incident occurred in 1749 when Giles Vermillion went before the court on behalf of his daughter. He told the justices that he "hath a daughter about fifteen years of age who hath been troubled with fits fourteen years which said fits hath much impaired her memory and quick destroyed the use of her hands and arms being so helpless and not to be able to feed herself and the malady increases with her years." Vermillion further stated that without the court's support, he would be fully incapable of supporting his daughter. Despite Vermillion's impassioned plea, the court rejected his petition. The justices must have eventually recognized the severity of Vermillion's situation and their own previous error, however, because the court began several years later to provide him with an allowance "for the support of his child."<sup>18</sup>

While the justices remedied their error in Vermillion's case, many problematic rulings were not amended. On several occasions, for instance, the court denied assistance to abandoned women and mothers. In 1722, Sarah Mills asked the justices to order her husband, who had recently abandoned her, to help take care of the children he fathered. The following year, Mary Moore asked the court

for an allowance, claiming that her husband had "lately left her in a bad condition." Once again, in 1724, Elizabeth Ward petitioned the justices for poor relief because her husband Murphey Ward had abandoned her, leaving her "incapable to support her self and four children."<sup>19</sup> In all three of these episodes, the court denied the women any assistance, leaving them on their own to search for ways to provide for themselves and their children.

These various incidents indicate that while the relief system was effective in some respects, it was nevertheless an imperfect operation. Men who received relief were almost always old, ill, and unable to work. But because of the widespread belief that women without husbands, even when able-bodied, deserved public support, a majority of poor relief recipients each year were females. With the exception of 1734, 1735, 1736, 1744, and 1747, a higher percentage of poor relief recipients were female during every year between 1734 and 1769.

In this poor relief system, nobody had a "right" to receive relief, and the county had no obligation to provide assistance to anyone. As a result, even when the justices attempted to act fairly and responsibly, the court faced numerous pressures that undoubtedly influenced the nature of its decisions. Financial considerations were especially important. In particular, making certain that the poor relief system did not become overly expensive and unpopular among taxpayers was always a significant concern. The cost of the relief system became an even more pressing issue during the second half of the eighteenth century when the number of people applying for relief grew dramatically, making it difficult for every "deserving" person to receive assistance.

One of the clearest examples of how changing circumstances could influence the court's decision was that even people who were already receiving pensions could not be certain of continued support. Each year, anyone who wanted public support had to petition the court, regardless of how many years she or he had been on the relief rolls. This arrangement created a situation in which people who had come to depend on a pension for their livelihood could instantly lose their support. In 1753, for example, Thomas Tucker told the court that his wife had for sometime been receiving a pension and that now, more than ever before, was "quite incapable of supporting herself." Despite Tucker's history of receiving relief payments, the court chose to deny her any further help.<sup>20</sup> Similarly, in 1750, the court denied Elizabeth Henneberry a pension even though it had "been pleased for this year or two past to make me an allowance from the county and I still grow more infirm I humbly begg your worships will make me an allowance that may be thought sufficient for my support."<sup>21</sup> In both cases, women who had been collecting public support for several years suddenly found themselves purged from the relief rolls even though they claimed their conditions were worsening. Were Tucker and Henneberry unable to get a pension because lack of money meant that it had to spread more widely? Did the court decide that

there were more needy and deserving people in the community? Or did the justices believe that family members or friends instead of the public could provide for Tucker and Henneberry? The absence of detailed evidence prevents an answer. Perhaps the court had good reasons for its actions. Nevertheless, the many instances in which the court rejected "worthy" petitions makes the justices' decisions appear inconsistent if not capricious.

These examples illustrate the realities of a system that provided an important means of support for many people but left others struggling to find alternative means of survival. As harsh as the consequences appear at times, they were not remarkable, considering that the justices had such immense and unregulated power over the decision-making process. Even though Maryland's poor relief system maintained the tradition of public responsibility towards the deserving poor, it nonetheless had numerous limitations. In particular, because the system gave a few individuals the complete responsibility for making choices that balanced both moral and financial considerations while providing no formal guidelines for making these decisions apart from individual conscience and community pressure, many needy and worthy people were undoubtedly deprived of aid they deserved. Because these inadequacies of the poor relief system meant that the destitute had no guarantee that they would receive relief or maintain their current relief payments from year to year, it is necessary to examine what other options existed for those people who fell through the gaps.

### **Church, Community, and Private Charity**

While surviving records present a clear idea of how the publicly administered poor relief system functioned, only minimal evidence indicates the organization and extent of private poor relief activity. Nevertheless, based on the records that are available for Prince George's County, family members and neighbors commonly assisted each other when able. "Even though the county court in Maryland and the Anglican vestry in Virginia were legally obligated to help the deserving poor," Kulikoff writes, "neighbors often banded together to help ill, destitute, widowed, or orphaned neighbors. In Prince George's this aid took three forms: alms to needy folk, shelter for the old and ill, and testimony before the justices about the worthiness of a supplicant."<sup>22</sup> Though the public system of relief assumed responsibility for some needy people who previously depended on support from the community, perhaps a majority of the poor relied on private support as a first and, in many cases, only option.

Once parishes lost an official role in distributing public relief, they do not seem to have compensated by increasing charitable activity. According to the Act for Religion of 1692, parishes were to levy a tax of forty pounds of tobacco for supporting a minister, and in 1698 vestries acquired the additional authority to

levy ten pounds of tobacco per poll to use for general parish expenses. The fact that churches received their operational funding through public taxation, though, did not limit their ability to collect additional revenue from the personal tithes of parishioners or through events such as lotteries. Despite the possibility that churches might have had to assume a significant role in providing for needy parishioners, vestry minutes from several parishes in Prince George's County provide no evidence that churches ever actively collected money on their own for distributing to the poor. The only record of organized church relief efforts between 1700 and 1770 is from the 1730 vestry minutes of St. Barnabus' Church in Queen Anne Parish. This incident, which involved a call for accounts by a person entrusted with the "money given as ablation and alms" confirms that individuals gave money to the parish to assist the poor, but does not indicate that this practice was an important function of the church.<sup>23</sup> This episode leaves open the possibility that some churches did make an effort to meet the material needs of their parishioners. However, the overall shortage of references to such activities, along with the fact that the one available parish record testifies that collections for the poor were handled in a careless inattentive fashion, indicates that even if churches did make some attempt to help the poor, poor relief was not a significant concern of the local parish.

While evidence of charitable activity within churches is scant, numerous indications exist of private charity among neighbors and family members. The Prince George's County court records detail incidents in which charitable assistance within the community provided an important source of support. Benjamin Christian, for example, stated in 1743 that he "must inevitably have perished" if his annual pension had not been supplemented with "the help of some of" his "well disposed neighbours."<sup>24</sup> Likewise, William Green stated that he had been "shot in his heel having many splinters of bone taken out before ye cure could be compleated which has entirely disabled him" and that having contracted many debts, was only able to subsist because of the "help of good will disposed people."<sup>25</sup> Additionally, in 1727, when John Tong first petitioned the court for relief, he spoke of "a poor woman" who had helped support him ever since a disabled leg had left him incapable of laboring. With this woman "unable to assist him" any longer, Tong found it necessary to seek public poor relief.<sup>26</sup> Another important form of non-public relief was that which took place within families. Philip Kelley and John Whitsit, for example, asked the court in 1747 to make them levy-free because they were unable to work in their old age and "are depending on their sons for the necessaries for life."<sup>27</sup> Furthermore, Eleanor Cessford stated during the November court session of 1756 that "after the death of your worships petitioners husband, everything [I] had in the world to support [myself] was taken away by his creditors." For some time Cessford had relied on relief from her mother, but she "has now broke up housekeeping and left

[me] quite destitute of relief.”<sup>28</sup> Despite the widespread availability of community assistance, there were nevertheless occasions when people sometimes had no access to such help. Jane Willers was in such a predicament when she petitioned the court in 1724. Willers claimed that she was in need of public assistance because she was “a poor woman destitute of friends to support her.”<sup>29</sup> Whether her friends and family had died or simply did not live in the area is not clear, but the incident does emphasize the importance of social networks within the community. Especially because communal institutions like the church did not appear to be actively involved in charitable activity, the ability to develop connections with members of the community was essential for obtaining access to the help that was available.

In addition to demonstrating the important role private relief played in Prince George’s County, these various petitions also establish the more critical point that pursuing public poor relief was an option most people considered only as a last resort when assistance from friends and relatives was not available or offered. In all of the cases cited above, the individuals seeking poor relief emphasized that they had requested a pension only because private means of support were no longer available. These actions on the part of the petitioners testify to both the availability of private relief and to the belief that the poor relief system was a resource for those unable to obtain adequate support from other people in the community.

The fact that people generally sought help from private sources before going to the court suggests either that people preferred private forms of assistance or that the operation of the public system encouraged people to act in this fashion. Kulikoff contends that people “avoided petitioning for relief because they recognized that such a request made them into servile dependents and outcasts from civil society.”<sup>30</sup> No doubt, a system that required pensioners to return to the court year after year to prove their need produced some feelings of bitterness and dependence. Yet, most people may have relied on the “help of good will disposed people,” not because they feared becoming dependent on the court, but because the court could not be relied on as an adequate and constant source of support. In other words, private charity was not so prevalent because people preferred it. In fact, an indigent could become just as dependent on private relief as public, and great stigmatism was also involved in humbling oneself to go before a friend or family member to ask for material assistance. Rather, the pension system seems to have been designed primarily to serve those who did not have other relief options.

It seems apparent that private relief options did not exist simply to provide a gentler alternative to the poor relief system; rather, their prevalence reflected the limitations of the public system. Because the court only provided support for those people it deemed “deserving,” the poor relief rolls were only composed of severely poor individuals who were unable to provide for themselves in any way. On the other hand, while economic conditions in Maryland during the first half of

the eighteenth century prevented most able-bodied people from falling into long-term poverty, some people did need assistance while suffering through a temporary period of financial difficulty. Furthermore, even elderly and sick individuals trapped in more permanent states of impoverishment could not rely on the court for assistance if their condition was not overly serious and relatives existed to provide care. People in these situations were the ones to whom charitable individuals directed their effort. In all probability, such people relied on private charity, not because they were reluctant to become dependent on public relief, but because the court-operated system was unwilling to assume responsibility for providing for them.

While the actual extent of private charity is not determinable, it was clearly the backbone of relief efforts in Prince George's County. The poor relief system worked more to handle cases that private initiatives did not deal with effectively. These included the costly care of very elderly and sick people as well as provisions for people whose lack of connections in the community left them without family and friends to help them. Because the poor relief system did not generally function as a primary resource for those in poverty, justices expected families to play a significant role in providing for their own. The failure of petitioners to pursue private relief options, in fact, often prevented them from receiving public relief. As a result, getting a poor relief pension depended heavily on a petitioner's ability to convince the justices that no help was available from other sources. Even people whose circumstances seemingly made them strong candidates to receive a pension could not assume that the court would help them if other individuals were able to assume the responsibility instead. One remark that Sarah Duvall made at a 1749 court session actually raises the possibility that public poor relief was at times only available to those who could sufficiently demonstrate an inability to get assistance from within the community. Explaining to the justices why she was in need of relief, Duvall stated that, "although [I] have parents, they are poore or say they are so that [I] cannot get the necessarys of life amongst them as [I am] ready to declare on oath as required."<sup>31</sup> The fact that petitioners offered to demonstrate through statements, witnesses, and even the taking of an oath that they had no means of maintenance apart from the court illustrates that the court viewed private charity as an important supplement to the poor relief system.

As discussed above, though private charity played a significant role, it nevertheless had limitations. The most significant restriction facing private relief efforts was their general inability to deal with people whose care required close supervision or costly intervention. Furthermore, unlike the poor relief system, which was always able to generate funding through the levy, private initiatives were much less stable and could be upended by changing economic conditions. For example, as Duvall's statement indicates, even when a poor individual had

family members living nearby, there was no guarantee that they would be able or willing to provide assistance, especially during times when difficult financial circumstances left a family unable to assume the added burden of providing for another person. Moreover, even if a family did have money to support a family member, many of the poor were so old and disabled that providing assistance required not only monetary support but also an extensive investment of time and energy that many families could not afford. William Nicholls found himself in such a predicament. For some time, he had been caring for Elinor Miles at his home. But because Miles was "very sickly and weak in which condition she still continues hardly able to put on her cloaths," Nicholls, being "a poor man and having numerous family of small children," found helping Miles to be "too burthensome." The nature of the relationship between Nicholls and Miles is not clear, but Nicholls was evidently torn between the obligation he felt to help Miles and the need to be more concerned about his own financial well being. As a result, he eventually asked the Prince George's County Court either to assume responsibility for caring for Miles or to compensate him for the time and money he was investing in caring for her.<sup>32</sup> Meeting the needs of a poor and feeble friend evidently proved too demanding for Nicholls to do on his own, as it likely did for other families as well.

Though some individuals were willing freely to extend help to the poor, on many occasions like those involving Nicholls people went before the court to seek compensation for the "charitable" assistance they were providing to someone. Edward Lanham, for instance, asked the justices in 1761 for "some allowance in the county levy" for the trouble and expense of caring for Richard Karsly, "a man that is almost blind and hath been so for many years [and who] came to his house on the 9th of October from a fair at Piscattaway: and had been there very much hurt and tore in one of his arms by some doggs."<sup>33</sup> Edward Bradshaw sought similar compensation from the court in 1723, when he told the justices that he had taken care of and decently buried John Cranfoot, who "came to his house the week before Christmas last where he continued ill and languishing until ye seventh day of March when he died." For having taken care of Cranfoot during his illness, the court awarded Bradshaw six hundred pounds of tobacco.<sup>34</sup>

People who cared for strangers who happened to appear at their doorstep were not the only ones making requests to the court for compensation: numerous people asked the court to reimburse them for the cost of caring for a family member. The court essentially subsidized family members to provide care, a practice that was probably less expensive than assigning indigents. In 1718, for example, John Lee petitioned the court to compensate him for taking care of and burying his sister, who, "taken sick on the road and found by William Nicholls lying by the road side who brought her to the said Lee's house where she dyed and was buried."<sup>35</sup> William Harris made a similar request in 1723 when he told

the justices that for the past "four or five years" he had "at a very great expense kept and maintained not only in the conveniences of life but in other very changeable disbursements his brother in law Joseph Ranson." However, because this responsibility was a tremendous financial burden, Harris claimed he was "unable to take further care of him." Harris, though, did not ask the justices to compensate him for his troubles; instead, he requested that they relieve him of the responsibility by assigning his brother-in-law to another individual and paying that person sufficiently to keep and maintain Ranson. The court responded to this situation in an unconventional fashion and attempted to compromise with Harris. While the court rejected the request to assign Ranson elsewhere, they did grant Harris "the said Joseph's portion of the estate of his deceased father being about eight pound's in satisfaction for the trouble and charge" he incurred for having to continue caring for his brother-in-law.<sup>36</sup>

Though lack of documentation permanently shrouds the manifold ways that mothers, fathers, sons, daughters, and neighbors came to the assistance of each other, it is nevertheless evident that for many needy families and individuals in Prince George's County, some form of private assistance was a vital if not the only source of aid. At the same time, despite the extent and importance of private charity, the public poor relief system still played a vital function as well. Especially for the elderly, widowed, and disabled people who made up the majority of the poor relief recipients, private support, while perhaps an option at one point in their lives, was probably no longer sufficient to meet long-term needs. Most people who suffered through periods of poverty, however, never had contact with the poor relief system. Those needy people for whom private charity was most valuable were those who were unlikely to receive public support. When these people suffered economic difficulties because of ill health, injury, or other circumstances, they had no alternative but to seek help from relations within the community. Though by no means creating a perfect system, the interplay of public and private relief effectively used the community's available resources to deal with the problem of poverty.

### A Solution for Its Time

During the first half of the eighteenth century, the problem of poverty in Maryland remained simple. Unlike conditions in England, land and opportunity continued to be relatively available. In addition, a small and dispersed population helped maximize opportunities for obtaining the use of land at an affordable rate, an essential component in preventing the development of a large class of impoverished able-bodied adults. Consequently, people who were physically able to labor rarely spent long periods of time in poverty. By purchasing or renting land, or in some cases by working as a hired hand, most free individuals in Mary-

land were able to earn a meager but adequate living. The availability of land along with a large labor shortage prevented all but a small minority from remaining unfed and chronically unemployed or underemployed.<sup>37</sup> County officials, therefore, saw no need to provide assistance to able-bodied workers. As a result, only residents who were permanently unable to provide for themselves because of age and infirmity (and in a few rare cases, those who were temporarily unable to labor because of a disability or illness) could expect to receive support from the court.

Because of these circumstances, the decades following the inception of the poor relief system saw the total number of Marylanders who depended on poor relief remain minimal. In 1709, for example, all counties in Maryland supported on average only fifteen poor relief recipients.<sup>38</sup> Prince George's was no exception, supporting only ten individuals in 1710 (with 1,727 taxables) and eighteen in 1711 (with 1,777 taxables). Even though the total number of recipients continued to rise in the county during this decade, the relief system did not become burdensome, because concurrent population growth always compensated for increased relief payments by providing additional tax revenue. In fact, with the exception of a brief drop that occurred for a few years between 1710 and 1719, the ratio of taxable citizens to individuals receiving poor relief pensions remained steady in Prince George's County. By the 1730s and 1740s, well over one hundred taxables supported each pensioner during most years. Thus, while the county often maintained between fifty and sixty pensioners during the 1740s, a growth in the taxable population to between five and six thousand people adequately counterbalanced this increase in the number of pensioners. Because land remained available, labor stayed in demand, and the number of poor dependents remained small, the poor relief system remained tiny but adequate, and was only a minor tax burden for the citizens of the county during these years.

Far from developing into a financial burden to the public, the poor relief system that first emerged in the 1670s changed little for several decades. With the system effectively accomplishing its purpose, authorities quickly dismissed as unnecessary recommendations that Maryland counties eliminate the system in favor of alms and workhouses. Talbot County, on Maryland's Eastern Shore, did appear to move toward creating a county almshouse in 1704 when the justices ordered all persons receiving poor relief to live at Daniel Sherwood's house.<sup>39</sup> However, Talbot was clearly the exception. Evidence of similar arrangements does not exist for any other county whose records have survived. Ironically, while 1704 marked the year that Talbot County established the framework for a poorhouse, it also marked the year that the Maryland General Assembly formally dismissed the idea of constructing poorhouses on a widespread basis. In considering a motion that "Stocks be provided and publick work houses built," the House resolved that because "the poore are Sufficiently provided for by law[,] there be-

ing no such thing as beggars going from door to door for want of employment," poorhouses were unnecessary.<sup>40</sup>

Despite this initial rejection of poorhouse construction, the issue did not go away. Several times during the eighteenth century, Maryland's English governors urged the construction of poorhouses for the deserving indigent and workhouses as a place of confinement and correction for vagrants. Nevertheless, Maryland's county leaders continually rebuffed such recommendations, claiming that the expense was too great and that there was no need for such arrangements in a colony where work was readily available for everyone and no problem with beggars existed.<sup>41</sup> Although the poor relief system failed to provide relief to all needy Marylanders, it did provide an adequate means of assisting many individuals who were sick, aged, or unable to work. Furthermore, as long as the number of people receiving relief remained small, the counties hardly needed to construct large houses that could accommodate all public dependents. Rather, it was more economical to place those dependents in need of intensive care in the private homes of county residents. Because of economic and social conditions in Maryland, the poor relief system that first appeared in 1671 maintained a high level of effectiveness throughout the colony for nearly a century.

### Toward the Poorhouse

While calls for the construction of poorhouses continued, no county showed any inclination to move away from existing poor relief methods though the 1750s. Suddenly, however, beginning in the early 1760s, people who had long defended the poor relief system began calling for its end and, echoing the words of Maryland's Governor Horatio Sharpe, supported "the building of Work-houses in every County."<sup>42</sup> The move towards poorhouses reached full stride in November 1765, when inhabitants of Baltimore, Anne Arundel, and Worcester Counties (Prince George's joined these three counties later in the legislative session) petitioned the legislature to authorize establishment of "hospitals or work-houses" in their respective counties. Feeling burdened by the current system, these counties asked for relief "from the great and heavy Charge arising from the Allowance made for the Support and Maintenance of the Poor." In particular, these four counties maintained that poorhouses would offer both a more economical means of providing for the deserving poor and also a way to "check the Disorders committed by" an increasing number of "common beggars and idle Vagabonds." As a result, with political pressure mounting and the evidence clearly demonstrating that the cost of providing for the poor was rising steeply, many legislators began seriously considering "Whether the Erection of Work-houses or Houses of Correction, in all the Counties, would not give great Relief to the Inhabitants in the annual Levies, [and] afford more regular and better applied Provi-

and that Government be made to bear the burthen of the poor relief, and that the poor be relieved by the Poor Law, and that the Poor Law be established.

*Governor Horatio Sharpe reported the need for poor relief to Frederick Calvert, Sixth Lord Baltimore, in 1754. (Maryland Historical Society.)*



sion for the Poor.” Particularly compelling for many legislators were the previous year’s tax levies from ten of Maryland’s fourteen colonies. These showed that the cost of poor relief totaled “One Million three hundred Seven Thousand Six hundred and forty two pounds of Tobacco.” Concluding that the “Burthen occasioned by our present Method of providing for the Poor is generally felt and complained of, and we could wish to see some better Regulation of this matter universally introduced into this Province,” the Upper House of the legislature concluded that building poorhouses was the most effective way to control the rising cost of poor relief. However, failure of the Lower House to endorse this position delayed further action until another session.<sup>43</sup>

The next significant development occurred during the autumn of 1766 when the Lower House appointed a committee to draft a bill for “the better support of the poor and for erecting workhouses in the several counties in the Province.”<sup>44</sup> Again, however, the Assembly took no further action during this session, and the issue seemed to disappear from the formal legislative agenda. But during the 1768 Assembly, legislators prepared and promptly passed through both houses “An Act for the relief of the poor within several counties named,” and Maryland finally took the first step toward revamping its poor relief system. Like the action the legislature took in 1765, the pivotal changes that developed in 1768 were the result of beleaguered counties placing pressure on the Assembly and arguing, as the preamble of the 1768 act stated, that the “number, and continual

increase, of the poor within this province is very great, and exceedingly burdensome . . . [and] might be greatly lessened by a due regulation and employment of them.”<sup>45</sup> During the 1768 session, Anne Arundel, Prince George’s, Worcester, Frederick, and Charles Counties called for the legislation. The Assembly’s rapid response to the petition of these counties strongly suggests that most legislators had come to realize the need for changing the method of providing for the poor.

The major accomplishment of the 1768 legislation was that it authorized each of the five counties to construct and manage an alms and workhouse at the public expense. The counties were to raise the necessary funds for constructing and operating the poorhouse by levying a tax of no more than fifteen pounds of tobacco per capita for three years. Once the house was in place, county magistrates were to appoint five “trustees of the poor” who would be responsible for managing the poorhouse, making laws to regulate the poor, and punishing vagrants, beggars, vagabonds, and other similar offenders. In addition, the trustees were to appoint an overseer of poorhouse who, according to provision XIV of the new legislation, was to “keep a fair and regular list of all poor, beggars, vagrants, vagabonds and other offenders, who shall be committed to their respective alms and workhouse, and also a fair and regular account, in writing, of all materials and other things coming to his hands . . . and of all expenses and charges attending their maintenance and support, and of all monies received by him for the sale of the produce of their labour.”<sup>46</sup> For the first time since Maryland instituted its poor relief system in 1671, certain counties were moving away from the practice of caring for the poor in private homes and instead were developing a centralized system that was intended to reduce the cost of poor relief and deal with the growing number of vagrants and beggars who had neither a permanent home nor steady employment.

The transition to alms and workhouse-centered poor relief was not entirely smooth for all the counties involved. Both Anne Arundel and Frederick, for example, had difficulty raising the requisite funds to implement the new system. Frederick County officials conceded that “it appears that the assessments heretofore made by the justices of Frederick County have not been sufficient to answer the purpose thereby intended and that there appears to be a considerable balance due.”<sup>47</sup> To remedy this problem, the Assembly had to pass legislation during the fall 1771 session to allow Frederick County to raise additional funds. Similarly, after spending three years raising money for the construction of a poorhouse, Anne Arundel County did not have nearly enough funds to build a structure large enough to accommodate its needs. Anne Arundel claimed that 180 individuals were currently receiving poor relief pensions and that this number did not include the vagrants whom the county would also have to place in the new workhouse. Furthermore, county officials claimed that “by the best

computation," they could construct a house capable of accommodating 130 people for no less than £3,000—and this estimate did not include the cost of purchasing land. The problem was that after three years of collecting levies designed specifically for the purpose of purchasing land and building an alms and workhouse, Anne Arundel had raised only £1,849. As with Frederick County, this predicament forced the trustees of the poor to petition the legislature "to afford them such Relief as on Consideration of the Premises they shall think fit."<sup>48</sup>

Despite these initial setbacks, support for the poorhouse did not wane. In fact, in 1773 the Assembly passed two acts, one for St. Mary's county and one for Baltimore County that authorized workhouses for those jurisdictions, and in 1774 it passed a similar act for Talbot County. The wording of the preambles of all three of these acts were almost identical to that of the pivotal legislation that the Assembly passed in 1768. They all attributed the need for a poorhouse to the "Number and continual Increase of the poor," which is "exceedingly burthensome [and] which might be greatly lessened by a due regulation and Employment of them."<sup>49</sup> As with Prince George's County several years earlier, more counties throughout Maryland had begun to recognize the need to enact fundamental changes in the way they provided for the poor. But in 1773, when St. Mary's and Baltimore had just begun the move towards establishing a poorhouse system, Prince George's was already well on its way. On January 30, 1772, the *Maryland Gazette* noted that:

The trustees for the Poor for Prince George's County having purchased one hundred acres of land according to an act of the Assembly to build a poorhouse for the poor of the said County, do hereby give notice that they will meet at Upper Marlborough on Monday the second day of March 1772 in order to contract with workmen to build a brick building for the above purpose. There are on the land very good clay, sand, water, wood and scantling. Any persons inclined to apply on that day, or before, may leave their proposals in writing with any of the trustees.<sup>50</sup>

While some counties were struggling to raise adequate funds for building a poorhouse and others had just received the Assembly's authorization to do so, by 1773 Prince George's County was prepared to move ahead and address the shortcomings of the old poor relief system.

### The Breakdown of Traditional Poor Relief

The social and economic developments that compelled many counties to abandon the traditional system of poor relief in favor of poorhouses and workhouses require examination. These included changes in population, the number of relief

recipients, the composition of poor relief rolls, and the declining ability people had to achieve economic stability and upward mobility.

For many years, the ratio of taxable citizens to the number of poor relief recipients remained roughly the same. But, beginning around the mid-point of the eighteenth century, the number of people on the relief rolls began to grow at a much more rapid pace than population.<sup>51</sup> A clear demonstration of these changes can be seen from the fact that, in 1743, 5,708 taxables supported 46 poor relief recipients. When the legislature created Frederick County in 1749 out of land in the western part of Prince George's, Prince George's instantly lost nearly 40 percent of its population (the number of taxables fell from 6,624 to 3,902). Because most Prince George's poor lived in more densely populated older areas, the number of pensioners did not decrease. Not until 1769 did the county's population again rise to 5,700 taxables. Over the same period, poor relief recipients more than doubled to ninety-six.

The dramatic loss in Prince George's population greatly exacerbated strains that were already pressuring its poor relief system. Even without the creation of Frederick County, the number of pensioners was growing faster than the population. Between 1749 and 1769, Prince George's added thirty-one people to the relief rolls and just under 1,800 new taxable residents. This development meant that there were fifty-eight new taxpayers available to support every new pensioner, a lower ratio than that for any one year between 1710 and 1769. Clearly, during the two decades after 1749, the conditions that had long made the poor relief system manageable and inexpensive were beginning to change. As a result, Prince George's and other counties that were experiencing similar developments began to complain of the oppressive cost of the poor relief system. An increased percentage of the population was beginning to receive annual relief payments, and the number of taxpayers available to support the pensioners was decreasing. Even if the average cost of maintaining a person did not change, the operation of the system was becoming more difficult and burdensome.

While dealing with a growing number of pensioners was troublesome enough for the counties, the particular way that the number of dependents was increasing placed even greater stress on the poor relief system. Specifically, the makeup of the poor relief population changed.

The most striking development was the increase in the number of pensioners who were long-term dependents of ten or more years. The percentage of people receiving long-term assistance grew consistently from 16 to 66 percent between 1734 and 1769, and their total number of long-term recipients increased from seven to forty, again attesting to the dramatic changes taking place. Conversely, the number of people who stayed on the relief rolls less than five years decreased steadily, a trend that continued between 1734 and 1769, becoming most

pronounced after 1747 when the number and percentage of people in these categories decreased to near insignificance.

The interesting aspect of these developments was that for the first time, growth each year in the *total* number of poor relief recipients occurred without a significant increase in the number of *new* recipients. The percentage of all poor relief recipients who were first-time pensioners decreased substantially, dropping from 34 and 39 percent in 1735 and 1736 to 16 and 14 percent in 1768 and 1769. Furthermore, during the very years in which the number of long-term recipients was expanding most rapidly, the number of first-time recipients was consistently minimal. These trends suggest that much of the growth in the number of people on the poor relief rolls resulted from changes in the composition of people receiving relief, specifically an increase in the number of pensioners who remained on relief for long periods of time, rather than an increase in the number of people petitioning for relief each year.

These changes created significant problems that counties had to address. First, because counties had to support poor relief recipients longer than before, the number of current pensioners did not decrease rapidly enough to allow room for new people to receive pensions without increasing the total number of recipients. As a result, even though the number of pensioners applying for relief each year did not increase significantly, the slower rate at which pensioners were purged from the rolls caused an overall growth in the total number of poor relief recipients at any one time. Secondly, because this increase in the number of recipients occurred almost exclusively among people who had received relief for at least ten years, poor relief operations became more complicated and expensive. The added expenses occurred because, while almost all pensioners were extremely poor and unable to work, long-term recipients tended to be the poorest of all. Some people, especially those who received relief for only a few years, did so as a means of temporary support while overcoming an illness or disability that prevented them from working. Long-term recipients, on the other hand, were often very aged and permanently incapacitated people who depended heavily on high pensions for their maintenance and were unlikely to escape poverty during their lifetimes. These circumstances made it necessary for the court to pay high pensions for long periods of time—costs that were often further inflated because the court had to assign these individuals to private homes that could provide intensive care and supervision.

A close study of long-term poor relief recipients reveals that their annual payments typically increased in a slow and systematic manner over time. Sophia Hawker, for example, received 283 pounds of tobacco (this and all of the following payments are adjusted for inflation) during her first year on relief. Her annual pension continued to grow in size during the next eighteen years she spent in the

relief system. In 1753 it rose to 306 pounds of tobacco, in 1755 to 467 pounds, in 1759 to 454 pounds, in 1763 to 451 pounds, in 1764 to 752 pounds, and during her final year as a pensioner in 1769, to 842 pounds of tobacco. Hawker is only one example of a pensioner whose relief payment gradually increased over a long period of time. Often, pensions were rather small when the person first received relief, steadily increased during the middle years as the pensioner's condition gradually worsened, and then grew quickly in the years approaching death, when the court often had to provide additional medical care or assign the pensioner to a private home.

With this tendency for pensions to increase in size over time, the average pension for the recipients was consistently higher than the average pension for people who were on the relief rolls for shorter periods of time. The county's costs increased further after 1750, when the number of long-term pensioners began to increase at an extremely rapid rate. In 1755, 1756, and 1757, for example, payments to long-term recipients amounted to 73, 70, and 76 percent of the entire poor relief budget. While the average payment in this category fluctuated considerably from year to year, the increased number of long-term petitioners meant that only once after 1750 did this group consume less than 50 percent of all poor relief expenditures. Only twice in the fifteen years before 1750 did these expenditures exceed 50 percent of the total budget. The high cost of caring for long-term recipients coupled with their rapidly increasing numbers in the second half of the eighteenth century placed extreme pressures on the traditional poor relief system.

The dramatic impact that the increased number of category four recipients had on the relief system is not as apparent when simply examining annual changes in the average poor relief payment distributed by the court. Just as there were rather strong fluctuations in the average payments of the four individual categories, the combined average relief payment of all categories shows an even greater tendency to vacillate. Nevertheless, an overall trend toward increased cost does emerge during the course of the century. For the years between 1734 and 1739, the average poor relief payment to a pensioner was £3.13. The payment increased to £4.60 during the decade between 1740 and 1749, only to fall to £4.38 between 1750 and 1759. However, aided by a steady increase in the average payment from 1763 on, including very large annual payments in 1767, 1768, and 1769—the years during which agitation for poorhouse construction reached its peak and saw the first significant piece of legislation enacted—the average pension grew to £4.74 between 1760 and 1769.

Another indication of the strain that the rise in pensioners placed on the relief system is the total annual amount of money that Prince George's County invested in poor relief. Between 1734 and 1764, there was a trend, albeit an incon-

sistent one, toward greater poor relief expenditures. This development was mainly the result of the gradual growth in pensioners that occurred during the first half of the century. Between 1764 and 1769, however, during which the number of pensioners increased from sixty-nine to ninety-six, poor relief expenditures in Prince George's County rose spectacularly from £257 to £819. Because the cost of the relief system increased without substantial population growth (5,170 taxables to 5,700 taxables), the tax burden per taxable also swelled tremendously. Whereas the tax burden fluctuated wildly between 1734 and 1764, it expanded steadily from 14 to 35 pence from 1764 to 1769. As a result, these changes placed pressure on not only the relief system but also the taxpayers who supported its operation as well.

The economic and social changes that took place during the second half of the eighteenth century were the major reason behind the move toward the poor-house. Counties argued that the existing method of providing poor relief had grown too burdensome, and there was little indication that the system would soon become less expensive to operate. Kulikoff maintains that the poor relief system began to break down in the 1750s and 1760s. "As youths migrated to the piedmont frontier, the proportion of older adults among the tidewater's population increased," he writes. "At the same time, tobacco inspection laws reduced production on marginal lands farmed by the poor and further added to poor rolls"<sup>52</sup> Based on the data available for Prince George's County, Kulikoff's assertion provides an adequate explanation for many of the changes that were taking place. Considering that the dramatic growth in the number of long-term pensioners took place without an increase in the annual number of new recipients, it is likely that an exodus of parts of the population played a significant role. As Kulikoff implies, because the young adults migrating from Prince George's rarely spent time on the relief rolls, the population that stayed behind contained a higher percentage of sick and elderly people who were more likely to be long-term pensioners.

Migration and the changing composition of the relief rolls, however, do not fully explain why the list of pensioners grew so quickly in the 1760s, especially considering the fact that the number of people petitioning the court each year did not decrease in spite of large migration. Understanding this problem requires a consideration of the economic changes that were taking place in the Chesapeake at this time, one of which was the displacement of middling farmers because of tobacco inspection laws. The efforts of Maryland's government to regulate tobacco came in the form of the Tobacco Inspection Act of 1747, which for the purpose of eliminating the practice of including "trash" tobacco in shipments, ruled that all tobacco had to be brought to one of seventy-five warehouses for inspection. At the warehouses, salaried inspectors examined the tobacco for trash and burned whatever was unfit for export.<sup>53</sup> Though the Act

Mr. GAZETTE,  
PLEASE to insert the under written, in this  
Week's Paper, and in so doing, you will much  
oblige your Customer,  
A PLANTER.

**U**pon perusing your News Paper, of the 5th of April, I found a Paragraph, arg'd by a Person, who subcribes George Mearwell; and what he said, is in favour of our Inspection Law: The Gentleman may justly subcribe himself Mearwell, for ought I know; but I am sure he is far from speaking well: He is been very candid in giving his Opinion upon an Inspection Law, shewing, that it has been of great Advantage to this Province; bat my Sentiments on that Head, will not allow me to join with him in his Opinion, for I am certain that the Inspection Law has been of no general Advantage to the Country. As he says, he infinuates he is a Well wifther to his Country, but I think he is not one; because no Man, in my Opinion, is a Well wifther to his Country, who pleads in Behalf of the Inspection Law: For what Experience we have already had of such a Law, plainly appears, that it has not been of an Advantage to the Country; and I am afraid it never will, should it continue ever such a Term of Years. We see daily, by the Accounts of Sales for Tobacco, which has been shipp'd for these last two or three Years, has not been higher than what we used to have before the Inspection Law was made, and in that Time of War also, when Freight was at fifteen Pounds per Ton, which was at that Time a great Disadvantage to the Accounts for Tobacco: The Accounts of Sales must make it appear, whether the Law has been of an Advantage, or not. As to my own Accounts, they are not so good now, as they were before the Law was made; and by what Information I have from many Gentlemen Planters, their Accounts are as low; which, if true, where is the Fruits of the Inspection Law? Why, I will answer, it was lost the first Year of it's being in Force, but not the Charges with it; no, the Charges still continues, and many of my poor Brother Planters feel it: And should the Law be revived, we must labour under many Charges, or more than we now do: But I hope the Legislative Power will ease us of our Burden, by throwing down a Law that has been only for the Interest of a few.

I must now take upon me to answer Mr. Mearwell, in a few Points, which he has given the Public, in regard to the Inspection Law. The Gentleman says, that the Expence of the new Law is overcome, and the Hardships is removed: In that Point, I must beg Leave to say, he is wrong in his Assertion; for the Expence which attends the Law, will never be at an End, while the Law continues, which is evident: We are at the Charge of Inspecting our Tobacco; we are also at the Charge of repairing the Houses, Scales, and Weights, &c. and how can Mr. Mearwell be right in his Assertion, by saying, the Burden is overcome. Mr. Mearwell also says, what must become of the poor industrious Planter, who has a Family to Support, a cafe the Law should fail? Indeed my Sentiments on that Point, tells me, he will do much better without the Law, than with it: For every reasoning Man must allow, it's a Hardship on poor Tenant, who gives, seven or eight hundred Pounds of Tobacco per Year, for their Rent, and will not perhaps make near that Quantity good, so as to pass Inspection (for we cannot make our Tobacco Good as we please), and if the poor Tenant's Tobacco should not pass, what must be the Consequence? Why, it is thus, he will have no Tobacco to pay his Landlord, neither will he have any to Support himself or Family in any Shape: This indeed we must say is a Hardship: But when there is no Inspection Law, if the poor Tenant's Tobacco should not be so good as to please his Landlord, he may dispose of it to some others, and if he should get but a small Price for it, it's much better

than having it destroyed: So that I must affirm, that the poor Planters is in a much worse Condition under the Law, than if there was no Inspection Law at all. Mr. Mearwell says, that before the Law, Merchants oblige the Planters to carry their Tobacco to such Places, where they kept Scales and Weights; but I find the Officers could not do the same. As for my Part, I never paid the Merchants, by carrying my Tobacco, to their Bye Places of Inspection, as I may so call it. I am sure it is not in the Merchants Power to compel their Debtors to do so, there is no Law to support them in doing so: If the Merchants had a Right, Why did not the Clergy, Sheriffs, and other Officers, do the same? Because there is no Law to support them. It is needless for me to answer Mr. Mearwell in all his Points, because too many of them are not worthy of Notice. I will not trouble my Fellow Planters with any thing more at present, but shall wait another Opportunity.

I am, Brether Planters,  
A Well wifther for no Inspection Law,  
A PLANTER.

VENICE, February 24.

**T**HE Court of Spain continues to make Remittances to Italy, where 'tis reckoned the Treasurers of that Power have actually above six Millions of Piastres in their Hands, Part of which, 'tis said, is to be employed in Trade, and the rest in War, for what we know.

**L**ehorn, Feb. 16. The Corsicans have published a Manifesto in Vindication of their late Violence, imposing, " That they entertain the sincerest Sentiments of Regard and Submission to the King of France; but that they are persuaded his Majesty is kept in the Dark with relation to their Affairs, and the Conditions on which they delivered their tenable Posts to the Marquis de Cusay" of whose Recall they complain bitterly.

The Delineations of Mr. de Cusay's Conduct while he commanded in Corsica, differ greatly. At Genoa they represent him as a Man of turbulent Ambition, who would act as Master, and suffer no Equal. At Paris, his Enemies give out, that to his Pride and Obscurity the ill Success of the Affairs of Corsica is owing; and that his not acting in Concert with the Genoese Commissioners, overruled the Measures of the Court, and hindered the Submission of the Corsicans. But his Friends, perhaps with more Truth, throw all the Blame on the rigid and cruel Policy of the Republicans. The Marquis, they say, is a Man of excellent Sense, and perfectly acquainted with the Genius of the People with whom he had to do. He knew that the fierce and haughty Maxims of the Genoese were very improper to prevail with Minds by Nature enemies to Dependence and Slavery, lowered by the ill Treatment they had frequently received, and filled with Aversion for Masters whom they considered as Tyrants, and invaders of their Liberties. The Marquis, knowing that moderate Measures alone could prove effectual, and that he behaved to rehne their Masters, and make them lay aside their Roughness and Intractability, after the Example of the wise Legislators called in the Assistance of the Arts and Sciences to civilize these Islanders, and by inspiring them with Politeness to teach them Submission. But this System, too moderate and gentle in the Eyes of the Republic of Genoa, and too much for the Honour of the Gentleman who planned and followed it, stirred up the Jealousy of the Commissary Grimaldi, and, though him, the Draft of the Genoese. A Scheme for effecting his Disgrace was immediately formed. They practised every Art to set the Majority of Versailles against him. Every Plan of Conduct which he laid down, was represented as a Conspiracy and Scheme to promote his boundless Ambition. All his seemingly ambiguous Steps, were brought together to form a real and incontestable Crime. The Truth of these Suggestions of his Friends is evident from the Or-

helped improve the quality of Maryland's tobacco shipments, it also reduced the ability of some planters to produce suitable tobacco. As the *Maryland Gazette* pointed out, these consequences fell particularly hard "on poor Tenants, who give seven or eight hundred Pounds of Tobacco per Year, for their Rent, and will not perhaps make near that quantity good, so as to pass Inspection (for we cannot make our Tobacco Good as we please)."<sup>54</sup> Despite the problems the Tobacco Inspection Act caused for poor freeman and tenants, what Kulikoff fails to clarify is that this measure was just one part of a larger economic transformation that severely limited the ability of individuals to purchase land, become independent, and improve their financial state.

Even more significant than the Tobacco Inspection Act in creating economic difficulties and social dislocation was population growth. As Maryland's population continued to expand, land became less available and less affordable for many planters, especially for servants whose indenture had ended and who were now seeking to establish themselves independently. In a vivid description of conditions in Talbot County on Maryland's Eastern Shore, the English Jesuit missionary Joseph Moseley showed the consequences of these changes. He wrote in 1770 that "I have seen white servants after their term of bondage is out . . . strolling about the country without bread . . . I've often seen poor, miserable abandoned families, in poverty want and misery. . . . It has been a fine poor man's country, but now it is well peopled, the lands are all secured, and the harvest for such is now all over."<sup>55</sup> In an economic system based on land ownership, a reduction in the availability of land could have disastrous consequences.

Conditions similar to those seen in Talbot County were evident throughout Maryland. Assessment records reveal that by 1783 non-landowners represented at least half the households in the older settled parts of the colony and large portions in all sections of the province.<sup>56</sup> Prince George's County underwent an even more acute upheaval than the colony as a whole. Between 1756 and 1771, population in the county increased by 27 percent, while the number of free-holders rose only 4.5 percent. Furthermore, 1765 land prices were two to three times higher than they had been in 1725. As a result, less than a third of all white freeman owned land by 1771. Conditions became so oppressive, in fact, that even Governor Sharpe stated that "Vacant Lands are not now to be procured here, and the want of Employment at times reduces them to Distress. It would I think be an Act of Charity to suffer them to go where they may provide more easily for their support."<sup>57</sup> Some people pursued exactly this option, moving to

*Opposite page: The Tobacco Inspection Act of 1747 drove many small farmers from their lands and increased the number of poor in the agricultural counties. The legislation drew the concern and criticism of one writer whose letter to the editor appeared on the front page of the colony's only newspaper. (Maryland Gazette, June 7, 1753, MSA SC 2311, 0-62-7-1, Maryland State Archives.)*

places such as the piedmont in search of land. Others, however, continued to live in Maryland despite the difficult circumstances. For many who stayed in the colony, the only option was to become a tenant farmer, a very small number of whom were eventually able to acquire enough money to purchase some land or possibly a slave. But most tenants never had this opportunity and were left to a life of meager subsistence and poverty. A large plantation owner in Prince George's County, writing under the pseudonym "George Meanwell," summarized the economic circumstances at the time. He wrote that "the honest industrious Planter, who has but a small Portion of Property; and the no less honest, but poor and laborious one who rents Land . . . makes a great Part of our People."<sup>58</sup> Not all analysts of the situation in Prince George's County and Maryland, however, were as sympathetic in tone as this statement, because in addition to causing great hardship for those farmers who were able to purchase a small plot of land or work out a tenancy agreement, the decrease in available land also exacerbated the more threatening problem of vagrancy. Because beggars placed an increased burden on the poor relief rolls and created a menacing social presence, Maryland's leaders viewed an increase in their numbers with alarm. Thus, when debate over the poorhouse took place in Annapolis during the late 1760s, the increased number of poor relief recipients was not the only consideration. Rather, the perceived need to limit presence of vagrants and beggars was also a significant consideration.

While it is clear that these broad economic changes increased the number of vagrants and were pivotal in producing agitation for altering the traditional poor relief system, their relationship to the growing number of people on the relief rolls is more dubious. No doubt, as the population in Prince George's grew and more needy people appeared in the community, pensioners probably began to view the poor relief system in a different way. When Prince George's was a small jurisdiction with only a few thousand taxable citizens, the poor relief system functioned as a community institution. The justices were often familiar with the people seeking pensions and the witnesses brought to verify petitions. Thus, while petitioners still had to go through the formal procedure of describing their circumstances, the justices probably knew something about their situations already. Because there was little anonymity involved in the petitioning process, only those people who could convincingly demonstrate a need for public support were likely to receive a pension. Furthermore, people would not go before the court and risk the stigma of rejection and criticism if they knew their situation did not warrant relief. As the extensive availability of private charity demonstrated, it was important to develop and maintain social ties in this type of community, and people were not likely to risk losing them in order to exploit the poor relief system.

As population grew and migration in and out of the county increased, the forces that had maintained the poor relief system began to weaken. The most significant changes came because, as community ties dissolved, the ability of

the court to select the most needy from a large group of petitioners became increasingly difficult. However, despite these important changes, there is no evidence that the court altered the strict definition of poverty it had previously held; nor did it necessarily become easier for "marginally" poor individuals to persuade the court to provide them with a pension. To the contrary, as the justices became less familiar with petitioners and the witnesses presented on their behalf, the court probably became even more discriminating in deciding whom it would provide public relief to. In fact, as the annual number of petitions grew, so too did the number of rejections the court issued. At the same time, while the court exhibited strong skepticism toward those petitioners or witnesses whom it did not know or who were new to the community, those pensioners who had clearly demonstrated their need for several years likely found it easier to obtain a pension. Though it is not necessarily inaccurate to say that long-term recipients learned how to manipulate the system, such a contention is somewhat problematic if it is taken to mean deception on the part of the pensioners. More likely, a trust developed between the recipients and the justices in a way that was not as available to new petitioners. Such developments help to explain the tremendous growth in the number of long-term pensioners that occurred during the mid-eighteenth century.

### **The Theory and Practice of the Poorhouse**

Two central reasons explain why county governments began to advocate the construction of poorhouses and workhouses in Maryland. First, was a concern county governments had with the rising costs of the traditional system of poor relief; second, was the desire to exert greater moral and social influence over the poor. These two concerns were fundamentally about social control, and the need county governments had to reestablish command over their finances and social environment, both of which were in a state of upheaval as a result of the economic changes then taking place. Many of the problems developed because, in light of economic changes and the social dislocation that had resulted from the loss of available land, the very concept of "the poor" had changed. In earlier decades, when Maryland offered most people at least the opportunity to provide satisfactorily for themselves and their families, the poor were largely restricted to the aged, the infirm, and the widowed. But as changing economic circumstances limited opportunity, a sizeable class of able-bodied poor who simply could not earn a satisfactory living began to emerge. How to address the manifest poverty of this new class of people while still maintaining a traditional notion of "deserving" poor proved a troubling dilemma.

Inherent in the ideology of the traditional poor relief system was the belief that the deserving poor should be differentiated from the undeserving poor, and that able-bodied adults such as beggars should not be permitted to depend on

public support. Because of such long-standing policies, impoverished vagrants had not gained access to the resources of the traditional poor relief system. Nevertheless, county administrators remained concerned over the problem of how this newly emerging class of people could be controlled if they were not economically sustained. In the construction of poorhouses and workhouses county governments developed a coherent policy that addressed the need to provide for the wandering poor, while more importantly exerting greater social control over them. Most notably, the theory behind workhouse and poorhouse construction was that it maintained the public's responsibility towards the deserving poor while excluding and disciplining able-bodied poor beggars by suspending their freedom to wander from county to county and forcing them to labor in order to support their upkeep.

The primary objective of the poorhouse was to provide a more economical method of poor relief—a policy that would, in effect, relieve the taxpayer rather than the poor. The poorhouse took the practice of assigning individuals to private homes a step further and arranged to have all recipients of public relief housed in a central location. In addition to eliminating the process of having to locate private homes for large numbers of individuals, the poorhouse was also a far more economical means of caring for large numbers of people. Once the initial cost of construction was financed, providing bulk quantities of food and clothing was less expensive than distributing pensions. In addition, because all relief recipients would be centrally located, providing medical care was easier for the doctors who no longer had to travel throughout the county.

Management of poorhouses and workhouses was also based on the idealistic assumption that goods produced by the able-bodied poor in the workhouse would compensate for the cost of providing for them. Around this assumption supporters of the poorhouse believed that they could deal with the poverty of vagrants and beggars while maintaining them in a controlled environment. The workhouse, in fact, was as much a jail as it was a place of industry. Article two of the 1768 Act for the Relief of the Poor ordered the counties to "apprehend, to cause to be apprehended, any rouges, vagrants, vagabonds, beggars, and other idle, dissolute and disorderly persons, found loitering or residing in the said county, city or town corporate, who follow no labor, trade, occupation or business, and have no visible means of subsistence whereby to acquire an honest livelihood, there to be kept at hard labor for any term not exceeding three months; and the overseer of such alms and work-house is hereby required to receive any poor, appointed as aforesaid to be received . . . and employ them according to the tenor of such commitment."<sup>59</sup> In other words, a person appointed by the justices was actively to search for and remove vagrants from the land.

Nothing in the wording of the act itself indicated whether people believed that vagabonds were lazy individuals who needed to be taught the virtue of indus-

trious behavior or whether placing them in the workhouse was more of a practical maneuver to eliminate their troubling presence. Regardless, the implications of this action were evident. As the composition of the poor changed in Prince George's County and across Maryland, the way that officials viewed them changed as well. Though the poorhouse still maintained the principle of the public's responsibility to the poor, one can also detect growing frustration and disillusionment with the necessity of providing for this growing segment of the population. Under the poorhouse system, all people who received public support had to wear a large letter "P" on the right sleeve of their garment to indicate their impoverished condition and dependence on poor relief. This symbol served not only to prevent pensioners from abusing private charity, but also branded and stigmatized them. This distinction was not reserved solely for the "undeserving" poor but was a symbol that all pensioners had to display. Furthermore, in the poorhouse, the overseer had authority to "compel" and "oblige" to labor, not just beggars and vagrants, but any poor individual "with sufficient ability to work . . . and to sell, and apply the money arising from such sale to their maintenance and support."<sup>60</sup> While caring for the poor was still accepted as a public responsibility, the practice now began to carry with it an added burden, and the belief was growing that the poor who were living off public support should work to help provide for their maintenance.

Many of these alterations in the way with which Prince George's County dealt with the poor reflected fundamental changes in the perception of poverty. At one point, socially pitied people received relief because of their troubled situation, and the public poor relief system represented a community-wide effort to assist those who had no other alternatives. Strong support for poorhouses, work mandates for the able-bodied, strict behavioral codes for inmates, and the forced wearing of the "P," revealed a growth in the idea that the poor should be ashamed of their condition. These developments angered many people who feared that the poor relief system was both too expensive and inadequate to meet the increasingly complex problem of poverty. In constructing poorhouses for the deserving poor and workhouses for beggars (who were to be actively captured when found in a county that was not their designated home), Marylanders were attempting to bring the stigma and sense of localism back to a poor relief system they sensed was no longer firmly in their control.

Embodied in the theory behind poorhouses and workhouses was the desire to combine more economical care for the aged, infirm, and traditionally deserving poor with a more effective method of controlling beggars. These functions gave the poorhouse a dual purpose of solving two distinct but related problems. In the process of the poorhouse's development, however, the distinctions that once distinguished the deserving from the undeserving began to blur. While the economic changes in Maryland created a new class of impoverished, over time the very philosophy that led to poorhouse construction also helped to

destroy the characteristics that distinguished the poor. The critical distinction between those who could work and those who were unable to work remained, but by placing all of the poor, regardless of the condition or cause of poverty, in one central institution, these demarcating characteristics became less important. Whereas the assigning process once allowed the general public to interact with the poor in an intimate manner, the poorhouse served to limit public contact with the poorer members of the community. The goal of providing for the poor became secondary to removing the poor from public view and thereby allowing the colony to once again give the impression that "the poore are sufficiently provided for by law there being no such things as beggars going from door to door for want of employment."<sup>61</sup> This new attitude was best captured by the badge of shame that all destitute persons from widows to outcasts had to display as a permanent reminder to themselves and others of their condition and their failure.

#### NOTES

1. Lois Green Carr, *County Government in Maryland, 1689–1709* (New York: Garland Publishing Inc., 1987), 359.
2. Ibid., 361–62. See also Nelson Waite Rightmyer, *Maryland's Established Church* (Baltimore: The Church Historical Society for the Diocese of Maryland, 1956), 20–21.
3. Though records from the first two decades of the eighteenth century indicate that the poor relief system was involved in providing for young children, the orphans' court soon absorbed much of this operation.
4. Allan Kulikoff, *Tobacco and Slaves: The Development of Southern Culture in the Chesapeake, 1680–1800* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1986), 297.
5. During most of the years covered in this study, tobacco functioned as the currency in Maryland and was consequently used in the distribution of poor relief payments. For a brief time, however, the legislature experimented with using paper currency, and in 1733, the Maryland assembly issued paper money in hopes that it would revive the economy. This change manifested itself in the poor relief system between 1736 and 1739, which were the only years during which the court did not make its payments in tobacco. See Kulikoff, *Tobacco and Slaves*, 113, and Carr, *County Government in Maryland*.
6. Prince George's Court Records, P, 595–96, Maryland State Archives.
7. Prince George's Tax Levies 1743–1760, 254, Maryland State Archives.
8. Prince George's Court Records, FF, 143.
9. Ibid., FF, 140, 272–273.
10. Though most cases of assigning in Prince George's County consisted of a single person, some examples can also be found where the court placed couples or even families under the care and provision of a private household. See, for example, Ann Kirmault and her daughter assigned to Captain James Haddock in 1717, Elizabeth MacDonald and her two children assigned to Thomas Stonestreet in 1717, Catherine Riley and her child in 1739, and Alexander Fraser and his family in 1747.
11. Information about the procedure of assigning poor relief recipients comes from the county tax levies, which identify those recipients the court assigned, in some cases the name of

the caretaker, and also how much currency the court gave the caretaker for assuming this responsibility. It is certain that the court assigned more people than the records indicate. Inconsistent recording style and lack of information for some years is most likely due to the clerk's decision about whether or not to record the information.

12. Prince George's Court Records, OO, 353.
13. Ibid., LL, 238.
14. Ibid., LL, 240.
15. See, for example, Major Lepprig keeping a bastard child in 1711, Major Thoms keeping Jane Bannister's child in 1713, Major Thomas Sprigg (who served as a justice between 1715 and 1725) keeping Lebella Grime's child in 1714, Captain Archibald Edmondson keeping Ann Flood's children in 1715, Captain James Haddock (who served as a justice in 1726) keeping Ann Kirmault and her daughter in 1717 and taking care of Elizabeth King in 1719, Captain Lerrie keeping Elizabeth Edmonds in 1719, and Major Josiah Wilson, who was assigned no less than eleven people between 1712 and 1716.
16. See, for example, Thoms Harwood (served as a justice in 1740) keeping Mary Wedge's child in 1734, 1735, and again in 1738, and John Hawkins (served from 1741 to 1754) keeping Elizabeth Wharton in 1737.
17. See, for example, John Beale Jr. (served as a justice from 1730–38) keeping Joseph Brooks in 1736, Alexander Magruder (served from 1731–35) keeping and burying Thomas Trottsman in 1734, William Dent (whose father served as a justice from 1730–57) keeping William Simms in 1736, Henry Truman (served 1740–55) keeping Ursla Smith in 1745, and Richard Keene (served 1741–54) keeping Mulatto Jane's bastard child in 1743, 1745, 1749, and 1750, and keeping Catherine Riley in 1751. Richard Keene was also very active in providing goods (and being promptly reimbursed by the court for the cost of these goods) to poor individuals who were not assigned. He provided "goods" to Elizabeth Crutch in 1743, clothing for Jonathan Lewis in 1744, clothing for Elizabeth Fennell in 1745, shoes for a "poor woman" in 1746, "goods" to John Knight and George Weaver in 1749, and "goods" to Grace Nicholls in 1750.
18. Prince George's Tax Levies 1734–60, 103, 119, 158.
19. Prince George's Court Records, K, 657, L, 5, 382.
20. Ibid., MM, 497.
21. Ibid., LL, 238.
22. Kulikoff, *Tobacco and Slaves*, 215. Chapter 6 in Kulikoff's work provides a thorough analysis of the development of a sense of community in the Chesapeake region and the many ways that these feelings of kinship manifested themselves.
23. St. Barnabus Vestry Minutes, 1705–1773, pages 88–89, Microfilm M255, Maryland State Archives, Annapolis.
24. Prince George's Court Records, CC, 139.
25. Ibid., X, 86.
26. Ibid., FF, 140.
27. Ibid., FF, 142.
28. Ibid., OO, 355.
29. Ibid., L, 385.
30. Kulikoff, *Tobacco and Slaves*, 298.
31. Prince George's Court Records, LL, 61.
32. Ibid., SS, 285.
33. Ibid., SS, 48.
34. Ibid., L, 5.

35. Ibid., H, 727.
36. Ibid., L, 310.
37. Carr, *County Government*, 364.
38. Ibid., 360.
39. Ibid., 360–61.
40. William Hand Browne, ed., *Archives of Maryland*, 72 vols. (Baltimore: Maryland Historical Society, 1883– ), Volume 26, Proceedings of the Acts of the Assembly of Maryland, 1704–1706, 117–18. This motion was considered in the Lower House between September 5 and October 3 of 1704.
41. Carr, *County Government*, 360.
42. Sharpe made this statement in a May 11, 1754 letter to Frederick Calvert, the Sixth Lord of Baltimore. Quoted in *Archives of Maryland*, Volume 6, Correspondence of Governor Sharpe Volume I, 1753–57, 66.
43. *Archives of Maryland*, Volume 59, Proceedings and Acts of the Assembly, 1764–65, xxx, 49–50, 62–63, 156–57. The Lower House debated this issue between November 1 and December 20, 1765. The quotations provided are from debate on Friday, November 15, 1765.
44. *Archives of Maryland*, Volume 61, Proceedings of the Assembly, 1766–68, xciv–xcvi. The decision to appoint this committee took place during debate on Wednesday, November 27, 1765. Further information is available in the *Archives of Maryland*, 59:xxx–xxxi, 181.
45. *Archives of Maryland*, Volume 61, Proceedings of the Assembly, 1766–68, 486–95. Debate over the counties' petition for a poorhouse occurred between May 24 and June 22, 1768.
46. William Kilty, *Laws of Maryland*, Vol. 1, 1692–1784. (Annapolis: Frederick Green, Printer to the State, 1799).
47. *Archives of Maryland*, Volume 63, Proceedings and Acts of the Assembly 1771–June/July 1773, 401–2. This statement took place during the Assembly proceedings of June 15–July 3, 1773.
48. *Archives of Maryland*, Volume 63, Proceedings and Acts of the Assembly, 1771–June/July 1773, (Baltimore: Maryland Historical Society, 1946), 303–4. Anne Arundel's petition and subsequent debate by the Assembly took place between October 2 and November 30, 1771.
49. *Archives of Maryland*, Volume 64, Proceedings and Acts of the Assembly October 1773–April 1774 (Baltimore: Maryland Historical Society, 1947), 219, 259, 380–81. The quotation is taken from a debate which occurred between November 16 and December 23, 1773.
50. Quoted in R. Lee Van Horn, *Out of the Past: Prince Georgeans and Their Land* (Riverdale, Md.: Prince George's County Historical Society, 1976), 35.
51. Since no tax lists are available for Prince George's County, I have used information on the number of taxable citizens as a guide for judging population growth.
52. Kulikoff, *Tobacco and Slaves*, 298.
53. Mary McKinney Schweitzer, "Economic Regulation and the Colonial Economy: The Maryland Tobacco Inspection Act of 1747," *Journal of Economic History*, 40 (1980): 551–67.
54. *Maryland Gazette*, June 7, 1753, quoted in Schweitzer, 559.
55. Joseph Mosely to Mrs. Dunn Jones, June 5, 1772. Quoted in Richard Walsh and William Lloyd Fox, editors, *Maryland: A History* (Baltimore: Maryland Historical Society, 1974), 91–92.
56. Gregory A. Stiverson, *Poverty in a Land of Plenty: Tenancy in Eighteenth-Century Maryland* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977), xi.
57. Horatio Sharpe to Thomas Gage, June 29, 1765, Gage Papers, William L. Clements Library, volume 39. Quoted in David Curtis Skaggs, *Roots of Maryland Democracy, 1753–1776* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press Inc., 1973), 41–42, 49, 59.

58. *Maryland Gazette*, April 5, 1753. Quoted in Skaggs, 42.
59. William Kilty, *Laws of Maryland, Volume 1, 1692–1784* (Annapolis: Printed by Frederick Green, Printer to the State, 1800), May 1769, Chapter 29, Article II.
60. Kilty, *Laws of Maryland, Volume 1*, May 1768, Chapter 29, Article XV.
61. *Archives of Maryland*, Volume 26, Proceedings and Acts of the Assembly of Maryland, 1704–1706, 117–18. This quotation comes from Proceedings of the Lower House on Saturday, September 9, 1704.



Ross Winans (1796–1877), Baltimore entrepreneur and engineer, built the strikingly different “Cigar Boat” in 1858. The ship’s bold and controversial form defied the conventions of nautical design and generated a heated debate in the scientific press. (Maryland Historical Society.)

# The Cigar Boat: Ross Winans's Maritime Wonder

WALLACE SHUGG

**F**rom the time of its launching on October 6, 1858, the citizens of Baltimore came to Locust Point by the thousands—on foot and in carriages and by ferry—to gape at the strange vessel being fitted out at Ross Winans's shipyard near Ferry Bar. Its 180-foot iron hull—two feet longer than the city's familiar landmark, the Washington Monument—floated with its tapered ends just above the waters of the Patapsco.<sup>1</sup> It was, as *Harper's Weekly* reported, like no other vessel afloat. "No keel, no masts, no rigging, no deck, no cut-water, no blunt bow, or round or square stern. In shape she resembles nothing so much as a large cigar. Round the middle of the cigar runs a round ring, attached to which are flanges, set at the correct angle to strike the water and propel the vessel."<sup>2</sup>

With this streamlined vessel powered by four high-pressure steam engines and two locomotive boilers, Ross Winans hoped to carry passengers safely and comfortably across the Atlantic in four days. Though years would pass before the goals of this visionary inventor were fully realized, his vessel's unique hull shape and other novel features were well publicized on both sides of the Atlantic, stirring the imagination of the general public and the maritime world as well.

The Winans name survives today only in a few Baltimore City placenames—Winans Way (from Edmondson Avenue to Leakin Park), Mount Winans (between Morrell Park and Westport), and Winans Cove (at Port Covington, Locust Point)—but Ross Winans was once regarded as one of the city's foremost citizens, a brilliant inventor-engineer who built locomotives and other railroad equipment for the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad that helped make it a commercial success.<sup>3</sup>

He was born of Dutch stock (original spelling Wynans) on October 17, 1796, the seventh of ten children, to a farmer in Vernon Township in northwestern New Jersey. His formal education ended at age seventeen, when he was apprenticed to a hardware merchant in New York City. At twenty-four he married Julia DeKay and settled briefly on a farm near Vernon, the gift of his father-in-law, on which their three oldest children were born: Thomas, William, and Julia.<sup>4</sup>

Initially, Winans came to Baltimore to sell horses to the B&O Railroad (in-

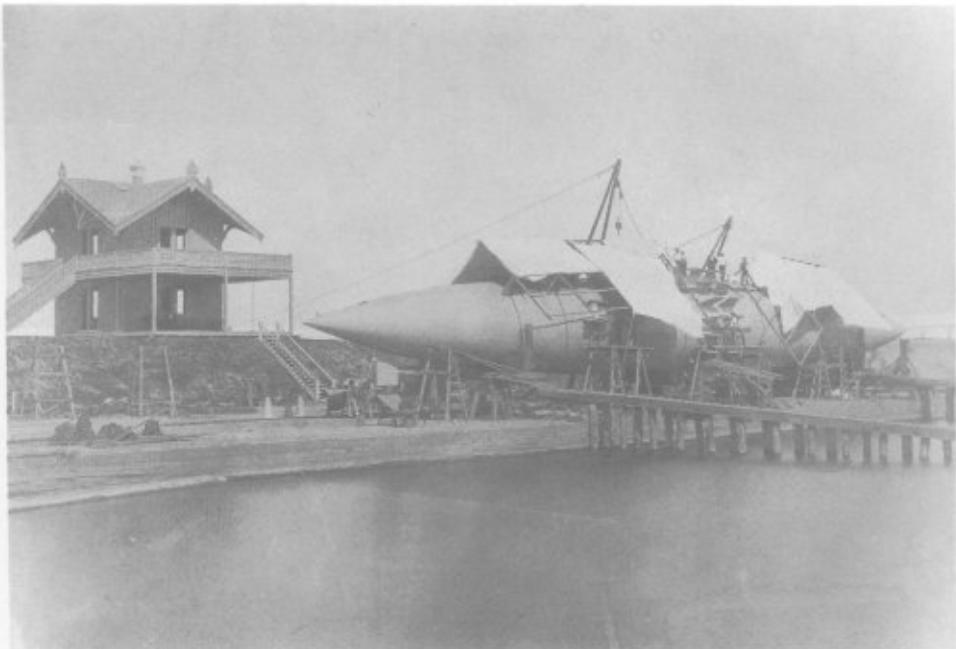
*Wallace C. Shugg's history of the Maryland Penitentiary, A Monument to Good Intentions, will be published in the spring by the Press at the Maryland Historical Society.*

corporated in 1827), which used horse-drawn railcars. He stayed on to help Peter Cooper and Phineas Davis develop the first efficient locomotive engine, the "Tom Thumb." Thereafter he designed his own engines, including the "Crab," the first to use a horizontal boiler and cylinders, thereby reducing vibration; and the famous "Camel," whose superior hauling power helped the B&O conquer the Alleghenies. He also designed the first coned wheels, whose slanted tread allowed railroad cars to better negotiate curves; the flanges that kept them on the track; and the friction wheel, whereby the axle and its wheels revolve as a unit set in outside bearings, reducing friction.<sup>5</sup>

Ross Winans's mechanical genius was inherited by his eldest son, Thomas, who became his collaborator in the early 1840s and subsequently enlarged the family fortunes. When the father was invited by the Russian government in 1843 to oversee the equipment of its railways, he sent his son, only twenty-two years old, in his place to demonstrate a specially built locomotive. Thomas Winans stayed on to complete the St. Petersburg to Moscow railroad more than a year before his contract with the government expired.<sup>6</sup> He returned in 1851 a millionaire and then built a palatial mansion, Alexandroffsky, a long-time city landmark which stood at Baltimore Street and Fremont Avenue.<sup>7</sup>

One can only guess how or when the idea came to Ross Winans for a boat hull shaped like a spindle with pointed ends.<sup>8</sup> As an inventor of railroad equipment, he had designed wheel bearings that reduced friction to produce swifter rail travel. He may have naturally<sup>9</sup> chosen his boat's streamlined hull shape as ideally suited to move more swiftly through the water. According to a letter written by his grandson Tom Winans, "the idea of the cigar ships and the principles governing them originated entirely with my grandfather, Ross Winans, of Baltimore, and any subsequent experiments were only the elaboration of his original ideas."<sup>10</sup> Be that as it may, it was his son Thomas who actually constructed the vessel, doubtless to spare his aging parent, who was on the verge of retiring from active business. With his father's Mount Clare railroad shops providing men, materials, and machinery, the work—once begun—would have proceeded quickly.<sup>11</sup> The site chosen was the present-day Winans Cove at Port Covington on the south side of Locust Point, not far from Ferry Bar Park.

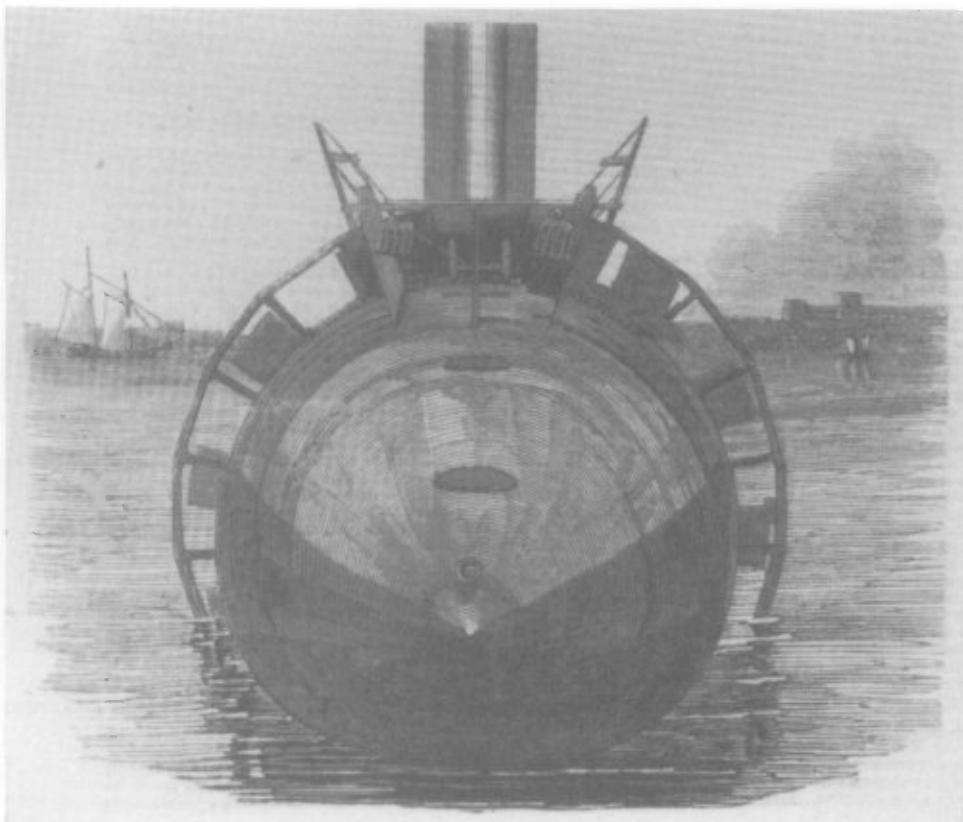
Even as the strange-looking hull was taking shape on the bank of the Patapsco, the idle and the curious came to gaze and wonder. Undoubtedly, there was some head-shaking, especially among those who had ever sailed the rough seas of the North Atlantic, but the engineering reputation of the family—the father, a founding mechanical genius of the B&O; the son, a builder of the St. Petersburg to Moscow railway—doubtless commanded some respect. The cigar boat soon became the talk of Baltimore and elsewhere in the nation, as its appearance in the pages of *Harper's Weekly* made clear. On October 23, 1858, the weekly published a remarkable spread of engraved illustrations based on photos showing "the famous



*Activity at Winans's Ferry Bar shipyard on the south side of Locust Point drew sightseers and critics while workers constructed the cigar boat. (Maryland Historical Society.)*

Winans steamer" at various stages of construction and after its launching. The images were made with the new wet-plate process,<sup>12</sup> which in itself suggests the importance of this shipbuilding event—or the determination of the Winans firm to promote their vessel.

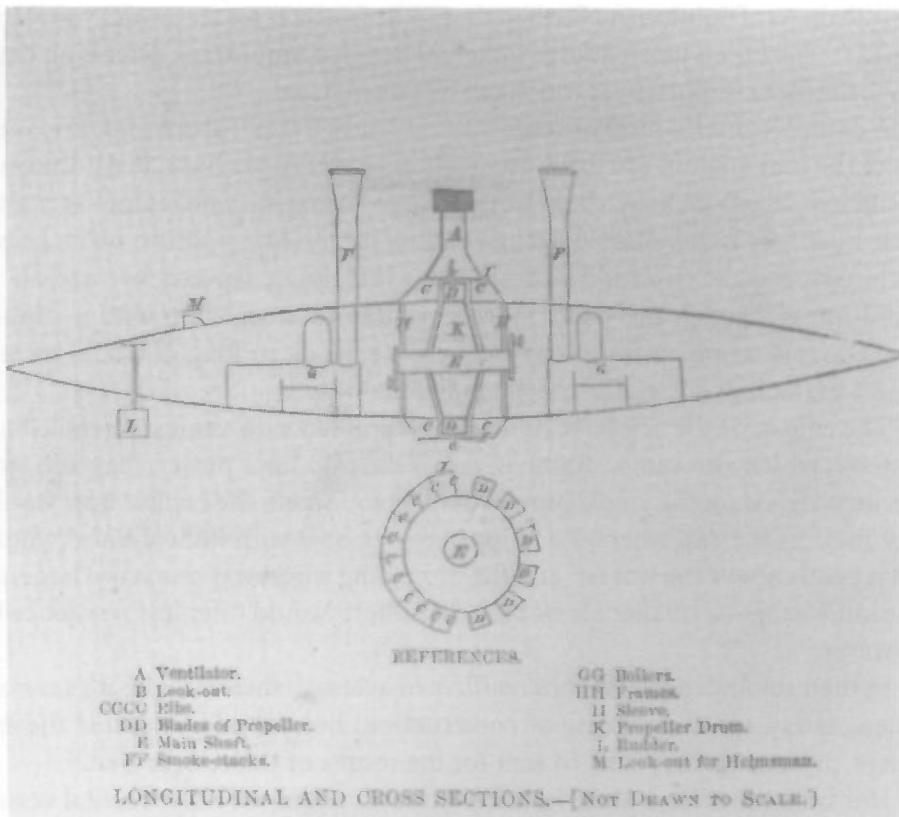
The editor of *Harper's Weekly* displayed a receptive attitude toward "this striking novelty," saying, "if successful, she will inaugurate a new era in naval architecture." He then presented the vessel's features without further comment, letting the illustrations and the builders' description speak for themselves. By discarding masts, spars, rigging, and most superstructure, the Winanses hoped their experimental vessel would prove safer, faster, more comfortable, and easier to construct than any sailing ship with auxiliary steam power. Its promenade deck was small—a mere strip of the hull with four settees attached—for passengers while at sea. The streamlined hull, 180 feet long and only sixteen feet at its widest, was expected to travel smoothly through the waves (not over them) fast enough to cross the Atlantic in four days. At each end was a spade-like rudder, measuring four by three feet, to guide the boat and provide stability. The ship was built of iron to make it fireproof, and compartmented to lessen the danger of sinking in case of collision. The outer shell, being circular, afforded maximum strength. The two halves of the hull were joined by a flat iron belt extending out from the hull and attached to it



A head-on view of the cigar boat showing its unique turbine propulsion. (Harper's Weekly, October 23, 1858. Courtesy of the Enoch Pratt Free Library, Baltimore.)

by numerous blade-like ribs. Within this protective belt rotated a ring of slanted vanes like a giant turbine.<sup>13</sup> This propelling wheel was attached to the main shaft driven by four high-pressure steam engines and two locomotive type boilers that could consume thirty tons of coal in twenty-four hours, the bunkers having a two-hundred-ton capacity. The whole vessel displaced 350 tons and could carry twenty first-class passengers who would be willing to pay a high rate for the swift passage. This favorable publicity, in a magazine with national circulation, was all the Winanses could hope for.

But as might be expected, the *Scientific American* was more critical in its coverage of the cigar boat. "From its form it must roll awfully in a heavy sea. It is a mistake to suppose that it will sail through the waves smoothly," the first, brief notice said, and then added somewhat unkindly, "We think it will be perfectly unmanageable."<sup>14</sup>



*Designs of the controversial boat appeared in local newspapers and national scientific publications. (Harper's Weekly, October 28, 1858. Courtesy of the Enoch Pratt Free Library, Baltimore.)*

The front page of the next issue displayed a large engraving based on a photograph of the nearly completed cigar boat plus longitudinal and cross-section diagrams. After quoting the builders' description, the editors briefly stated their objections: in the event of a mechanical breakdown, the boat—having no sails—"must lie a helpless log upon the waves"; its round hull will prove unstable, like "a barrel on waves or any rough water," its conical bow will not cleave the waters as safely as a clipper bow; and its hull, without a keel and being so long in proportion to its beam, will roll too much.<sup>15</sup>

The Winanses were stung by this adverse criticism from the *Scientific American*, whose masthead, after all, proclaimed it to be "The Advocate of Industry, and Journal of Scientific, Mechanical, and Other Improvements." Their joint letter of reply took up nearly an entire four-column page. The builders faulted the editors' wholly negative appraisal of their boat's prospects, "in which

one-sidedness of opinion put forth to the public (so far as we are aware) you stand alone.”<sup>16</sup> They then poured forth long and detailed arguments defending their vessel, the more important of which can be summarized.

A complete mechanical breakdown is unlikely, the Winanses said, since any one of the four engines can drive the vessel at ten miles per hour. But if the boat should lose all power, a sail could be jury-rigged using the smokepipes as masts. Their boat was well ballasted against rolling by the low position of its heavy machinery, and the two rudders acted like a keel. Being tapered fore and aft, it would move through the water more smoothly than any ship with a clipper bow. The hull would rock (pitch) less because, being so long, it would be less subject to the rocking motion of the individual waves.

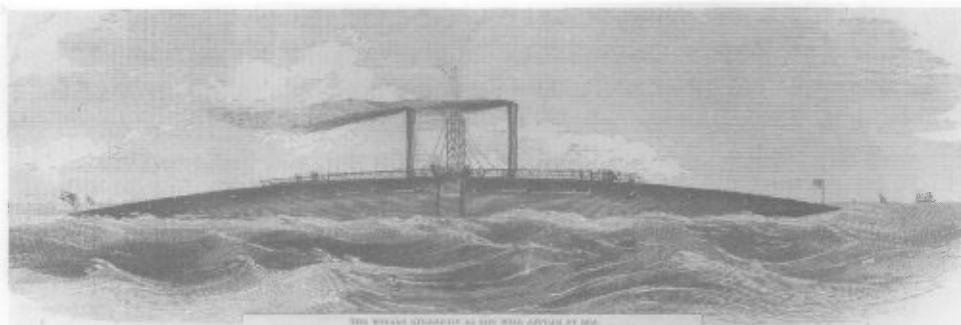
The editors of the *Scientific American* responded with similarly detailed arguments, which also can be summarized: if the ship loses power, they said, any sails jury-rigged on the smokepipes would be too small; the conical bow would bury itself in the sea, whereas a “clipper wedge bow with hollow lines” would “lift it gently above the waves;” and the propelling wheel was much too large, its position wrong—a smaller screw propeller astern would offer less resistance to the waves.<sup>17</sup>

In their rejoinder, the Winans reaffirmed at length their cigar boat’s seaworthiness, safety, speed, and ease of construction. But the editors ended the exchange, preferring, they said, to wait for the results of the vessel’s trial.<sup>18</sup>

Nor were the editors alone in voicing doubts about the experimental vessel. From St. Petersburg, where he was carrying out the family’s contract with the Russian government, William L. Winans wrote his older brother Thomas on January 4, 1859: “My only fear in this whole business is that Father & yourself may from interest & excitement be induced to risk yourselves too much in the boat before experience may prove it to be safe. . . . You will be able to find plenty of people to go for *you* by *paying them well*.” And then prophetically: “The Boat I feel sure you will find too small to stand a strong Blow on the Atlantick.”<sup>19</sup>

Back home, as they tested the cigar boat’s machinery at the dock, the Winanses could bask in the friendly publicity of the *Baltimore Sun*. When the propelling wheel turned at full speed (eighty to ninety rpm), the newspaper reported that “no careening or oscillating of the vessel was produced by its action. . . . The water was thrown from the wheel . . . with much violence and in large masses . . . in a manner and direction . . . particularly well calculated to produce forward motion. . . . [yet] The action of the wheel was remarkably smooth and free from jar or unpleasant sound.” Any fears that this iron-hulled boat with two fire rooms might prove uncomfortably warm were apparently laid to rest: “The ventilation . . . was highly satisfactory, the temperature not exceeding 54 degrees Fahrenheit at any time.”<sup>20</sup>

The first trial run came at 11 A.M. on Thursday, January 20, 1859, and received



*Artist's conception of the Cigar Boat as she would appear during a sea trial. (Harper's Weekly, October 23, 1858. Courtesy of the Enoch Pratt Free Library, Baltimore.)*

ceived enthusiastic coverage by the *Sun* the next day. "The steamer turned gracefully from her moorings and was headed down the Patapsco. With a pressure of fifty-six pounds (half her capacity) a satisfactory headway was made. The points of the bow and stern barely touched the water, and the even progress of the vessel caused no commotion of the waves, but left a smooth wake like a groove." Upon reaching North Point (a distance of six miles or so), she headed back and opposite Fort McHenry "was greeted with a salute of six guns from the fort, and in recognition of the compliment the steamer's flags were displayed and the steam whistle blown." A holiday atmosphere prevailed:

The steamer, both going and returning, was greeted by the crews of all the craft in the river with cheers, waving of hats, and other demonstrations of a like nature. Besides the officers of the vessel . . . and a number of workmen, there were aboard Thomas Winans and Ross Winans, Esqs., and their ladies. The steamer returned about 2 o'clock and after playing about the open water, was returned to her moorings at the yard of the builders. The average speed attained was about 12 miles an hour. The ventilation below decks was perfectly preserved during the running of the machinery and at no time did the thermometer rise above 65 degrees Fahrenheit. We believe the builders regard the trial as satisfactory, and a guaranty of success when greater distance is attempted.<sup>21</sup>

Surely, father and son felt vindicated.

In contrast to this glowing account of the cigar boat's first trial the editors of the *Scientific American* merely observed:

We learn from the Baltimore *Sun* that this steamer has made a short

trial trip in smooth water, and it is stated that it made about twelve miles per hour, but the whole power of the engines was not applied. From the published account we have not been able to learn any of the particulars of the vessel's performance, except that it was very lightly loaded, drew only about six feet of water, and that good ventilation was obtained.<sup>22</sup>

Clearly, the editors remained skeptical.

Brief though it was, the *Scientific American*'s account of the trial run suggests a basic design flaw of the cigar shape hull: the vessel was lightly loaded and operating in smooth waters, yet full power could not be applied (in contrast to its earlier dockside test) because it tended to bury its nose, as the *Scientific American* had predicted on December 11, 1858. This tendency seemed confirmed by the Winanses next decision: to increase their vessel's speed by lengthening it from 180 to 194 feet, adding to the forward section of the hull.<sup>23</sup> The effect of this change would be to shift the weight of the machinery aft from amidships and so lighten the bow, like the raised bow of a canoe when a solitary paddler sits in the stern. A sufficiently lightened bow would then allow full power to be applied. "She should *in spite of the Devil* go 21 knots per hour," William L. Winans wrote his brother Thomas from St. Petersburg on February 16, 1859, "with all Europe & America looking on, . . . we must not spare any pains or expense to give it the fairest Run of a trial."<sup>24</sup>

By the fall of 1859, according to the *Sun*, several additional lengthenings were made, the vessel tested each time, until her hull reached 235 feet overall and she seemed ready for trials in less protected waters. Her first port was to be Norfolk. Thereafter, if all went well, she would visit New York and perhaps even Portland, Maine, in time for the arrival of the *Great Eastern* from England, in which case, the *Sun* opined, the port would then be host to "two of the greatest wonders of the marine world."<sup>25</sup> It must have pleased Ross Winans to have his brainchild coupled so with the largest ship built up to that time.<sup>26</sup>

After another trial run of twenty-five miles down the bay on October 12, the cigar boat departed for Norfolk on Friday, December 2, a voyage of some 180 miles.<sup>27</sup> The long-awaited trial in open waters took place on Wednesday, December 7. According to the *Sun*<sup>28</sup> the cigar boat started out accompanied by the U.S. revenue cutter *Duane* and tugboat *Young America* and steamed to Old Point Comfort in one hour and four minutes. Then to Cape Henry at the mouth of the Chesapeake Bay in two hours and eighteen minutes, returning to Norfolk at 5 P.M. Her progress throughout the trip was reported to be "steady, neither rolling nor pitching, but rising with greater buoyancy than was expected from a vessel of her peculiar shape and construction." Those aboard "experienced no inconvenience from wind and wave," while those aboard the tugboat "suffered considerably from

her rearing and pitching." Then an experiment was conducted that seems unbelievable.<sup>29</sup> "To test the steadiness of the Winans steamer, a tumbler was filled to the brim and placed in a plate. The motion of the steamer was so steady as not to spill a drop of the contents." The trial became a celebration towards the end: aboard the cutter, refreshments were served, "conviviality and pleasantness ruling the hour, [and] Thomas Winans, the projector and designer of the new marine wonder, was toasted."<sup>30</sup>

Yet another trial in smoother waters—"for the gratification of the ladies"—took place the very next day and was evidently staged as a social event by the wealthy Winanses. An astonishing "70 ladies and 46 gentlemen" crowded aboard the vessel. "The steamer went out of port gallantly, and proceeded about ten miles down the river, returning in two hours. As the steamer passed through the harbor with her precious freight, the continual waving of handkerchiefs on shore and on board, indicated the general feeling that prevailed."<sup>31</sup> The presence of so many ladies among these well-heeled passengers meant the experimental vessel was regarded as reasonably safe, comfortable, and sanitary.

But halfway through her return trip to Baltimore the next day, according to the *Sun*, a "very slight leak" occurred in the boiler tubes, forcing the boat to stop.<sup>32</sup> The captain's logbook, however, put it differently: both boilers leaked "very badly" and eventually "gave out."<sup>33</sup> Rockets were sent up, the *Sun* continued, and a passing steamer notified the Winanses. The cigar boat resumed her voyage after repairs and nearing Fort Carroll was met by a tug sent by the Winanses in case of need:

Three cheers and a shrill whistle, which indicated that all was "right" on board the steamer, was the only recognition the tug received for her pains, and the steamer shot past, and was almost out of sight before the tug could recover from her surprise and put about for the city, slowly following in the wake. . . . the steamer, too proud to accept [help], came dashing up, conscious of her own power to outride the waves, overhauling everything in the shape of a water craft, and leaving them behind to struggle in the wake.

It was, according to this lyrical account, a triumphant homecoming.

Given the cigar boat's publicized success, why did the Winanses fail to show her off as planned in New York, where that other "wonder of the marine world," the *Great Eastern*, would soon be drawing huge crowds?<sup>34</sup> Such a trip of course would have meant venturing into the "Atlantick," which William L. Winans had by now twice warned them against doing in such a small boat. Though lengthened since its first trial by 31 percent (from 180 to 235 feet), it still had the same diameter of only sixteen feet and hence could roll excessively in heavy seas. A boat with twice the diameter would be needed, William wrote them. Until then,

he said, they should confine their trials to Norfolk and the Chesapeake Bay: "You will also there be able to keep the Results to yourselves if you should think best to do so, which you could not well do even if you went to New York."<sup>35</sup> It seems the publicity-conscious Winanses put off the trip for better news management, as well as safety.

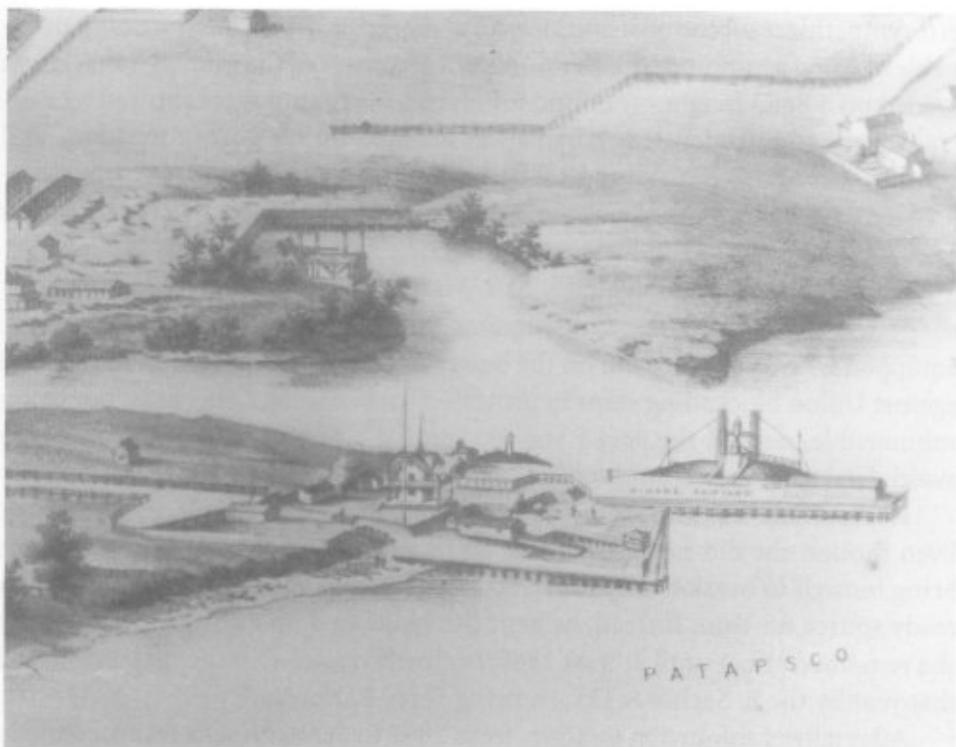
For the vessel had other weaknesses, and the place to look for them is not in laudatory newspaper accounts of the day but in the design changes made in later boats built by Thomas Winans, who took over the experiments after his aging father retired. The next cigar boat—only seventy feet long and nine feet wide—was built at St. Petersburg in 1865 for the czar in the hopes he would order an imperial yacht based on this prototype. Gone was the midships propelling wheel, replaced by a conventional screw propeller in the stern. Another vessel of similar shape and size was built at Le Havre, but having two screw propellers at each end on four shafts. The largest was the *Ross Winans*, 256 feet long and sixteen feet wide, launched with great fanfare in front of thousands of onlookers at London in 1866. She had a large promenade deck and a propeller at each end attached to a central shaft running the length of the ship, turned by a single steam engine located amidships.<sup>36</sup>

None of these redesigned cigar boats had an amidships propelling wheel, the source of the original cigar boat's most serious problems:

The huge rotating propeller wheel threw so much spray from amidships aft that it was almost impossible to stay on deck.... the shroud ring with its heavy brackets offered considerable resistance to motion in the sea, and the working [flexing] of the two half hulls about their junction caused cracking and consequent leakage. In addition, the screwshaft glands were difficult to keep tight. Another problem was the difficulty of coordinating the orders to the two engine rooms . . . before the invention of the engine room telegraph.<sup>37</sup>

A particularly dangerous problem here, especially for such a long and narrow boat, would have been the flexing of the two halves about the connecting shaft, which in a heavy sea might break her apart. This weakness alone could have dissuaded the Winanses from risking their vessel on a voyage to New York, or any other deepwater trip for that matter.

And so the midships propelling wheel, one of the two most distinctive features of Ross Winans's brainchild, had to be discarded. But the distinctive cigar shaped hull persisted in all the later Winans experimental boats, like the fish symbol used by the early Christians to proclaim their faith. The streamlined shape was supposed to give the boat superior speed by travelling through the waves, not over them. Yet the nose of this whaleback vessel tended to run awash,



Winans's Cigar Boat anchored at Ferry Bar, portrayed in a detail of the 1869 Sachse map of Baltimore. (Maryland Historical Society.)

rather like the similarly shaped nuclear submarine today while running on the surface.<sup>38</sup> Partly because of this tendency, none of the later cigar boats ever made extended deepwater voyages. Ross Winans's dream of a boat carrying passengers across the Atlantic in four days would not be realized until 1936, by the *Queen Mary*, a vessel with a towering bow and superstructure.<sup>39</sup>

Nevertheless, the Winans cigar boat incorporated certain other features that would later become commonplace throughout the maritime world: the use of steam engines alone, not just as an auxiliary to sail; iron hull construction to make the vessel fireproof; numerous watertight compartments to prevent sinking; and forced draft ventilation to control temperature. With no experience in naval architecture, Ross Winans designed a boat that, however eccentric its appearance, cannot be called a complete failure. Moreover, in the conservative world of naval architecture, where design innovations tend to be infrequent and gradual, its inventor set an example for daring and imagination.

Ross Winans's inventive mind was undaunted by his cigar boat's shortcomings. With the outbreak of the Civil War in the spring of 1861, Winans—a South-

ern sympathizer—built that summer an armored, self-propelled steam gun capable of firing a hundred balls per minute, a precursor of the modern tank. It was loaded on a B&O freight car bound for Harpers Ferry but was captured by Federal troops and dismantled. Winans was arrested for his part in the affair and confined in Fort McHenry and later Fort Warren, Boston Harbor, where he occupied his time writing a book on theology, *One Religion: Many Creeds* (published in 1870). He was released on November 26, 1862.<sup>40</sup>

Although there is no evidence that Winans was directly involved, the cigar shape was adopted by the Confederates for their *David*-type torpedo boat, equipped with a spar torpedo on the bow.<sup>41</sup> Designed to operate on the surface against Union blockading ships in protected harbor waters, this boat, not being submersible, needed the speed and low profile afforded by its cigar shape to avoid detection.

Ross Winans's cigar boat seems to have occupied a special place in his heart. Even though she did not prove to be a practical seagoing vessel, he could not bring himself to break her up for scrap, not even during the Civil War years as a ready source for iron. Instead, he kept the vessel tied up at his shipyard where she remained afloat until at least 1869, as clearly depicted in the map published that year by the E. Sachse & Co., showing Ferry Bar point.<sup>42</sup>

After a brief sojourn in London, from 1867 to 1869, Winans returned to his home at Hollins and Parkins Streets where in the early 1870s he wrote various pamphlets on religion, education, and hygienic reforms in housing. Feeling the years of physical decline now upon him, he made out his will on November 29, 1875.<sup>43</sup>

He lived to see the cigar shape embodied in yet another vessel, the sailing yacht "General Sokoloff," built of iron and launched ceremoniously at Ferry Bar by his son Thomas on June 9, 1876, with over five hundred attending "and a large number of private carriages containing ladies."<sup>44</sup> But his various ailments, chiefly heart disease, forced him at last into a wheelchair. The end came in his eighty-first year at 2:30 on the morning of April 11, 1877, when he "died quietly in the presence of his family."<sup>45</sup>

His cigar ship remained tied up to her pier at the Winans shipyard until she finally fell to pieces, some of which were brought to the surface during the decade of the 1920s.<sup>46</sup> Today, Winans Cove is empty, save for the seagulls hovering in the sky above. The land adjacent, site of the old shipyard, is covered with grass and fenced in, posted with sternly worded signs against trespassing, fishing, or loitering. At the entrance to the cove, a double row of blackened stumps reaches out, barely visible above the waters of the Patapsco.

## NOTES

1. *Baltimore Sun*, October 12, 1858.
2. *Harper's Weekly*, October 23, 1858, 677.
3. Robert Keith, *Baltimore Harbor: A Picture History* (Baltimore: Ocean World Publishing Co., Inc., 1988), 59.
4. Carlyle Barton, Jr., "Ross Winans: Railroad Engineer" (unpublished senior thesis, Princeton University, 1943), 1–2, 5–7. MS 916, box 4, Maryland Historical Society (hereinafter MdHS).
5. Ibid., 9–10, 21, 37, 39–40, and Paul J. Travers, *The Patapsco: Baltimore's River of History* (Centreville, Md.: Tidewater Publishers, 1990), 142.
6. *Biographical Cyclopedia of Representative Men of Maryland and the District of Columbia* (Baltimore: National Biographical Publishing Co., 1879), 46.
7. *Baltimore: A Picture History 1858–1958*, Commentary by Francis F. Beirne, compiled under the auspices of the Maryland Historical Society (New York: Hastings House, 1957), 29.
8. I have found no record of any other spindle-shaped surface vessel that could have inspired Winans. Robert Fulton's submersible *Nautilus* (1800) was an elongated version (without pointed ends) of David Bushnell's cask-like *Turtle* (1776). The sketch of Silas Halsey's cigar-shaped submersible (ca. 1814) was found in the papers of Samuel Colt, not published until 1978. See Norman Friedman, *U.S. Submarines Through 1945: An Illustrated Design History* (Annapolis, Md.: U.S. Naval Institute Press, 1995), 12, 315, notes 3, 6, 7, and 10.
9. Without a model basin at his disposal, he could have conceived of his streamlined hull shape from the common observation of a long and narrow rock in a streambed creating less turbulence than a round rock.
10. Tom Winans to Mr. Semmes, November 25, 1924, MS 916, box 4, folder 90, MdHS.
11. Ross Winans became sole owner of the Mount Clare shops on the death of his partner in 1844. He retired in 1859. See Carlyle Barton, "Ross Winans," 49, 50.
12. Though no credit is given for the photographs of the cigar boat, at least one was made by David A. Woodward, a locally prominent drawing teacher and photographer at the Maryland Institute [College] of Art, who used the wet-plate process developed by Scott Arthur in 1851. On this project Woodward would also have used an enlarger patented by himself in 1857 (interview with Curator Tom Beck of the University of Maryland, Baltimore County, on January 13, 1998).
13. Winans could have used a screw propeller, invented by John Ericsson of Sweden and others between 1833 and 1836. See Peter Kemp, *Encyclopedia of Ships and Seafaring* (New York: Crown Publishers, Inc., 1980), 101.
14. *Scientific American*, October 23, 1858, 53.
15. Ibid., November 6, 1858, 65–66.
16. Ibid., December 4, 1858, 102.
17. Ibid., December 11, 1858, 109–10.
18. Ibid., January 22, 1859, 162.
19. MS 916, box 22, folder 93, MdHS.
20. *Baltimore Sun*, January 11, 1859.
21. Ibid., January 21, 1859.
22. *Scientific American*, January 29, 1859, 170.
23. *Baltimore Sun*, February 10, 1859.
24. MS 916, box 22, folder 93, MdHS.
25. *Baltimore Sun*, October 4, 1859.

26. Launched January 1858. Gross tonnage—18,914; displacement—32,724 tons. Length—692 feet; beam—83 feet. It was the only ship ever built equipped with screw propellers, paddle wheels (with separate engines), and sails. See Kemp, *Encyclopedia of Ships and Seafaring*, 86, 95, 180.
27. *Baltimore Sun*, October 14, December 1, and December 13, 1859.
28. *Ibid.*, December 10, 1859.
29. This writer remembers being aboard the battleship U.S.S. *New Jersey*, a much larger and more stable vessel, in rough seas off Cape Hatteras in 1954, watching the water move about in a deep sink located below deck in sickbay.
30. December 12, 1859.
31. *Ibid.*
32. *Baltimore Sun*, December 13, 1859.
33. Logbook of "H. Vaughn, Master," MS 916, box 18, MdHS.
34. According to the diarist George Templeton Strong, the *Great Eastern* reached New York on June 28, 1860 "to find the shores black with throngs excited over her arrival. In the first five days 143,764 people paid to visit her." *The Diary of George Templeton Strong* (New York: Macmillan, 1952), 3:37.
35. MS 916, box 22, folder 93, MdHS.
36. John Guthrie, *Bizarre Ships of the Nineteenth Century* (London: Hutchinson & Co., 1970). 24. The launching is pictured on page 23. The boat received extensive coverage in the British journal *Engineer*, 2 March 1866, 153–54.
37. Guthrie, *Bizarre Ships of the Nineteenth Century*, 22.
38. The cigar shape of the experimental submarine *Albacore* in 1950 and the later Skipjack class of nuclear submarines was based on an airship form. See Norman Friedman, *U.S. Submarines Since 1945: An Illustrated Design History* (Annapolis, Md: U.S. Naval Institute Press, 1994), 56, 60, 61, 249 note 12.
39. Kemp, *Encyclopedia of Ships and Seafaring*, 189.
40. Barton, "Ross Winans," 73–77. Pictures of the gun can be found in several newspaper clippings (undated, but from the twentieth century) in MS 916, box 4, folder 101, MdHS.
41. Not to be confused with the Confederate submersible *Hunley*, which also had a spare torpedo attached to its bow, but whose hull had been fashioned from an old boiler cylinder. See this writer's article, "Prophet of the Deep: The H. L. *Hunley*," *Civil War Times Illustrated*, 11 (February, 1973). Diagrams and a photo of the *David*-type boat clearly showing its cigar shaped hull can be found on pages 6 and 9. Winans's direct involvement would have been unnecessary since the Confederates could have remembered seeing his cigar boat in either *Harper's Weekly* or the *Scientific American* a few years earlier.
42. Readers over sixty may be reminded here of the late Howard Hughes, who paid over a million dollars a year out of his own pocket to maintain his unsuccessful giant all-wood troop transport, the "Spruce Goose," in an airplane hangar from 1947 until his death in 1975. See Charles Higham, *Howard Hughes: the Secret Life* (New York: G. P. Putnam & Sons, 1993), 131–32, 323, 327. Robert Keith published this section of the Sachse map in his *Baltimore Harbor: A Picture History*, 59.
43. Carlyle Barton, Jr., "Ross Winans," 81–84.
44. *Sun*, 10 June 1876.
45. Obituaries in the *Sun* and *Baltimore American*, April 12, 1877. Ross Winans was buried in Green Mount Cemetery in the family plot.
46. *Hambleton Collection of Baltimore Reprints* (Baltimore: Hambleton Co., 1930), description of "The Steam Yacht Ross Winans," item No. 170.

# “Intelligence, Though Overlooked”: Education for Black Women in the Upper South, 1800–1840

MARY CARROLL JOHANSEN

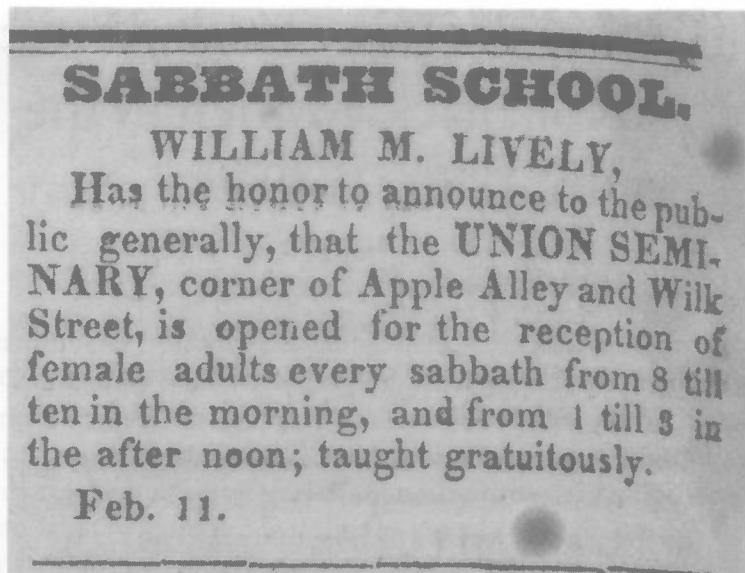
In the early nineteenth century, black and white educators established at least forty-six schools for free black children in Maryland, Washington, D.C., and Virginia. In proposing to educate black children and prepare them to lead their communities, educators offered an implicit challenge to slavery. If, according to slavery's apologists, justification for slavery rested upon the mental inferiority of the African, then producing an educated free black population should have exposed the fallacy of the slaveholders' arguments. Educators sought to provide pupils with the skills and self-discipline necessary to be industrious and self-supporting members of the free black community. As teachers, black women played central roles in instilling virtue and knowledge in successive generations of children.

Eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Americans had faith in the transforming power of education. Education, they believed, could instill virtue and moral fiber, as well as knowledge, in a pupil. The growth in black education came at the same time that opportunities for white children to attend school were also expanding. Carl Kaestle has suggested the possibility that nearly all urban white children in the early republic attended school for a few years, as did a substantial number of southern white children living in rural areas.<sup>1</sup>

Linda Kerber has argued that the ideology of Republican Motherhood guided women in education; as mothers, women were to be the earliest and most influential teachers molding generations of children into virtuous citizens of the republic. Women quickly extended their educational role from the private work they performed within the household to the more public task of school teaching. Joan Jensen, in her study of Quaker women, defined the idea of teaching daughters, young women who acquired education and spent the years between childhood and marriage engaged as school teachers outside the home. For these Quaker women, Jensen suggests, literacy was a liberating force that propelled them into the public sphere and, ultimately, into reform work.<sup>2</sup>

Black and white supporters of education for black women embraced the idea that women were crucial to the transmission of knowledge and virtue from

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Teacher William Lively offered an academic education to Baltimore's free black children that emulated the schooling of their white peers. (*Genius of Universal Emancipation*, February 18, 1826. Maryland Historical Society.)

one generation to the next. The advocates of black education did not expect that women would confine their influence to the home; instead, they prepared women to take on teaching roles within the black community as well. As teachers, women could improve conditions for the race by imparting literacy skills, instilling religious and moral principles, and instructing girls to be good mothers. And, as teachers, women could support themselves, a necessity that Suzanne Lebsock identified for many free black women.<sup>3</sup>

This study focuses on the Upper South because it was a region in which slavery was a contested issue in the early nineteenth century. The growing free black population in Maryland, Virginia, and the District of Columbia suggests the discomfort some residents of the region felt about slavery, but the strengthening of laws regulating both slaves and free blacks indicates a firm resolve to protect slavery. Literacy, recognized by blacks and whites as a measure of and a means to power, was a key area of contention between white advocates of slavery and free blacks. Through statute and riot, whites sought to limit black access to education, while African Americans attempted to spread education more widely among the black population in the early nineteenth century. At a time when, Ira Berlin argues, the door was slowly closing on the freedom of African Americans, education was a crucial wedge used by free blacks trying to maintain or improve their social and economic position in the Upper South.<sup>4</sup>

The existence of several dozen schools for free black children in the urban centers of the Upper South provides the opportunity for a closer study of the education of free black women. But the sources that exist for these schools are also problematic. Aside from newspaper advertisements, a report by the U.S. Secretary of Education published in 1871, and the records of one academy in Baltimore, no archival sources exist for these schools. While the advertisements typically list the courses offered, they give no hint of how the classes were taught, what books were used, or how many students were enrolled, and only rarely do they explain the teachers' rationales for providing an education for free black young women. The secretary of education's report describes the teachers who opened schools for black children, but does not detail who enrolled in the schools or what subjects the teachers taught. Few analytical studies have been done on the education of free blacks in the early-nineteenth-century South, and for good reason: sources are difficult to find. But, this article should provide at least the beginning of a study of free black education.<sup>5</sup>

In his *Notes on the State of Virginia*, first printed in 1785, Thomas Jefferson argued that blacks were in imagination and reason "much inferior" to whites, and suggested that their deficiency of faculty was "a powerful obstacle" to their emancipation. His opinion, widely shared by southern slaveholders, provided whites an important justification for enslaving blacks. Suggesting that African Americans were incapable of caring for themselves, slaveholders adopted what they termed a paternalistic attitude toward their "servants." They provided slaves "protection" and guidance in return for their labor.<sup>6</sup>

Other Americans scoffed at the idea that blacks were inherently mentally inferior to whites; they blamed environmental factors for any supposed mental deficiencies. In 1804, Clement Clark Moore demanded how "the wretch," who labored all day "with the whip flourishing over his head, ought to be a poet." The Reverend Samuel Stanhope Smith seconded Moore in 1810, arguing, "Genius . . . requires freedom." Antislavery advocates refuted Negro inferiority in an attempt to tear down one pillar upon which the institution rested.<sup>7</sup>

Even opponents of slavery, however, showed ambivalence toward the need to provide an academic education for free blacks. An anonymous editorialist, writing in the abolitionist newspaper *The Genius of Universal Emancipation* in 1826, argued it had "been proved by intelligent teachers that the descendants of Africa are many of them as rich in intellect as the whites." Yet, this writer, who sought to convince planters that blacks "are free agents, and possess inalienable rights," proposed a circumscribed education for them. While recommending instruction in basic literacy for all free blacks, and advanced education for some, the writer's educational plan focused on manual education. The writer wished to provide African-American men and women with "some useful art or trade." Females above the age of twelve were to be taught how to spin, an employment

that would allow them to support themselves and to raise money to educate other African Americans.<sup>8</sup>

Although Americans debated the intelligence of African Americans, they fought more fiercely over the continuation of the “peculiar institution.” The northern states, led by New England, moved toward the emancipation of slaves after the American Revolution. The revolution’s rhetorical emphasis on liberty for all, combined with the relatively small role slaves played in the region’s economy, led to the emancipation of all slaves in the North by 1827. Representatives of more southern states like South Carolina staunchly supported slavery during negotiations over the new federal constitution; the South’s agricultural economy depended on slave labor.<sup>9</sup>

Maryland and Virginia Tidewater planters, though, were finding that growing tobacco was an increasingly unprofitable occupation. Some abandoned their worn-out farms for new land to the west. Others turned to wheat farming, adopting the same staple crop that northern planters grew without slave labor. Some planters in the Upper South, prompted by economic dislocation, the egalitarian rhetoric of the Revolution, or evangelical fervor, did free their slaves. Virginia’s free black population rose from 12,866 in 1790 to 49,842 in 1840, while Maryland’s rose from 8,043 to 62,078 over the same decades. But, neither state ended slavery within its borders, and both limited the freedoms of free blacks who resided within the state.<sup>10</sup>

As Americans discussed the future of slavery in their nation, education became a critical battleground. Proponents of slavery tried to limit the access of any black person, slave or free, to education in hopes of protecting slavery against actual slave revolts or verbal attacks. The uprising led by Virginia slave Nat Turner in 1831 reconfirmed for slaveholders the danger of educating slaves. Turner had learned to read “almost miraculously” as a child and, white southerners suspected, had been inspired by reading William Lloyd Garrison’s *The Liberator* to strike out for his own freedom. Consequently, slaveholding states passed laws restricting the rights of slaves or free blacks to gain educations. In 1831, for example, Virginia forbade “all meetings of free negroes or mulattoes . . . for teaching them reading or writing.” Blacks and mulattoes who violated the law would receive twenty lashes, while their white teachers risked fine and imprisonment. Having forbidden blacks to receive an education within the commonwealth, the state in 1838 decreed that black residents who left Virginia to receive an education could not return. Neither Maryland nor the District of Columbia explicitly prohibited the education of free blacks, but they did not encourage it, either.<sup>11</sup>

Standing in opposition to slavery’s apologists in the Upper South were black and white educators who proposed to educate black children and to prepare them to lead their communities. These teachers challenged slavery by seeking to

demonstrate the educability and self-discipline of African Americans at a time when most white Americans doubted whether they possessed these skills. Supporters of education for black women, embracing the nineteenth-century idea that women were a beneficent influence not just at home but in the community as well, tried to prepare black women for lives of service to their families and communities as mothers and teachers. As teachers, women would improve the race by teaching religion and literacy, giving young women skills to support themselves as needleworkers, washerwomen, or teachers, and training girls to be good mothers. The responsibilities educated black women took on, in the home and in the community, mirrored the expanding role that some middle- and upper-class white women were also claiming in the early nineteenth century.<sup>12</sup>

Most of the schools in Maryland, Virginia, and the District of Columbia that enrolled black female pupils during the period 1800 to 1840 were coed institutions. Just six of the forty-six identified schools were definitely single sex. Given the black community's low economic status and relatively small number of well-educated members, both teachers and students benefited from open enrollment policies. Many coed schools, which were typically taught by just one teacher, enrolled eighty or more students, indicating the scarcity of teachers willing and able to teach non-white pupils.

Schools in the Upper South that accepted African-American women and girls fell into two broad categories: the majority offered classes only in reading, writing, arithmetic, sewing, and religion, while a smaller number of academies that opened in the 1820s and 1830s taught more advanced subjects as well. The Sunday School Committee of the Pipe Creek Branch of the Anti-Slavery Society of Maryland was typical of most schools for black students. It taught reading and writing to pupils in 1828, and pronounced itself pleased with their "good conduct and diligence." A similar school founded in 1818 by the Resolute Beneficial Society of Washington, D.C., offered to teach free people of color "reading, writing, arithmetic, English grammar or other branches of education appropriate to their capacities." The society's stated intention was to improve the intellect and morals of free black youth, and it promised to receive indigent blacks into its school gratis.<sup>13</sup>

At the other end of the economic scale, young women whose families could pay a moderate tuition could choose from among several Baltimore schools offering a choice of subjects comparable to those found at schools for white women. At proprietor William Lively's school in the 1820s, boys and girls could learn reading, writing, arithmetic, grammar, geography, history, geometry, composition, natural philosophy, Latin, Greek, and French; young women could also receive instruction in needlework.<sup>14</sup> Up Sharp Street from Lively's seminary, H. J. Churchman and C. Leeke, two white women, ran a school for girls in which they taught reading, writing, arithmetic, grammar, geography, history,

**H. J. CHURCHMAN & C. LEEKE'S  
SCHOOL FOR GIRLS,**

AT THE CORNER OF SHARP & BALTIMORE STREETS,  
*Is now ready for the admission of pupils.—In this School will be taught*

**READING, WRITING, ARITHMETIC, ENGLISH GRAMMAR,  
GEOGRAPHY, WITH THE USE OF MAPS AND GLOBES, HISTORY,  
ELEMENTS OF ASTRONOMY AND NATURAL PHILOSOPHY,  
PLAIN SEWING AND SAMPLER WORK,**

**TERMS FROM THREE TO EIGHT DOLLARS per quarter.**

 At an additional expense, the FRENCH LANGUAGE and DRAWING will also be taught if desired.

Baltimore, 2d Mo. 20, 1826.

ISAAC TYSON, MATTHEW SMITH, HUGH BALDERSTON, P. E. THOMAS,	REFERENCE TO G. T. HOPKINS, W. M. DALLAM, JOSEPH TURNER, JR.
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H. J. Churchman's school for middle-class African-American children trained young women to be teachers. (Genius of Universal Emancipation, February 18, 1826. Maryland Historical Society.)

astronomy, natural philosophy, and needlework. For an additional fee, pupils could also earn the accomplishments of French and drawing. William Kelsey's "Academy for Young Ladies," which accommodated "a few Genteel Boarders," probably offered many of the same classes.<sup>15</sup>

A comparison of course listings indicates that white and black teachers taught many of the same subjects at their schools for black pupils. For example, the schools taught by Churchman and Leeke, who were white, and William Lively, who was black, both offered classes in geography, history, natural philosophy, French, and sewing. These teachers did not leave behind written documents indicating why they chose to offer those classes, but they apparently agreed that black women were interested in and capable of mastering the disciplines.<sup>16</sup>

The course of studies at academies for middle-class black students was similar to that at many schools for middle-class white women. White female pupils at Mr. and Mrs. Wheat's school in Washington in 1832, for example, enrolled in courses in spelling, reading, writing, arithmetic, grammar, geography, chemistry, and natural philosophy. As electives, they could add needlework, French, Latin, Greek, music, drawing, or painting. The Charlottesville Female Academy, which enrolled white young women, offered neither the electives in Latin, Greek, and painting, nor the core courses of natural philosophy and chemistry, but like

their black counterparts in Baltimore, girls studying in Charlottesville received instruction in astronomy and composition.<sup>17</sup> Thus, the schools open to middle-class African Americans offered most of the academic subjects undertaken by educated middle- and upper-class white women. No papers or exams exist today to document the quality of instruction young women received at any of these schools, but, at least in terms of subjects taught, educational opportunities for a small number of middle-class black women began to approach those for their white counterparts in the 1820s and 1830s.

Records suggest that at seminaries offering instruction in the higher branches of education, male and female students enrolled in many of the same courses, including geography, history, and natural philosophy; in fact, approximately two-thirds of the seminaries were coeducational. Only female students, however, took classes in needlework and French, studies that were the mark of an educated lady, while boys instead enrolled in the Greek and Latin courses that prepared men for college.<sup>18</sup> Through their educational choices, middle-class black families sought recognition of their abilities, but they also observed the educational gender line that separated male and female pupils at schools enrolling white children.

Among white southern families, Christie Anne Farnham argues, higher education marked a young woman as “a lady worthy of protection, admiration, and chivalrous attention.”<sup>19</sup> In a society in which black women were scarcely acknowledged as female persons, let alone as ladies, the black middle class of the Upper South made a bold demand for better treatment of black women through the education it provided. By calling black women “young Ladies,” as William Kelsey did in his 1827 advertisement, or by teaching students French and embroidery, educators, through word and deed, sought to expand the definition of “lady” in the South to include free black as well as free white women in the early nineteenth century. But, neither antebellum nor post-bellum white southerners were willing to accept this new definition. At the end of the century, according to Paula Giddings, black women would still be making the same unsuccessful demand to be acknowledged as “ladies.”<sup>20</sup>

Among lower-class women, an emphasis on basic literacy, diligence, and morals was typical of the education received by white and black pupils in the early nineteenth century. In its 1819 report the Baltimore Orphanage Charity School stressed its emphasis on teaching white female pupils “the rudiments of education” as well as “habits of industry.” Americans in the early nineteenth century embraced the idea that institutions such as charity schools and reformatories could cleanse society of its imperfections while teaching citizens to be pious, pure, and hard working. For African Americans, the idea that education could improve society was even more important than it was for whites. By demonstrating their intelligence, piety, and diligence through the academic achievement

of a substantial proportion of the freed population, free blacks hoped to undermine the false premise of black inferiority that helped justify slavery.<sup>21</sup>

But most free blacks, unable to afford private school tuition, had few opportunities to attend school. As the number of free blacks in the Upper South grew in the nineteenth century, governments imposed harsh restrictions designed to limit their social and economic mobility. Washington prohibited African Americans from attending its all-white public schools until Congress approved a provision establishing schools for black pupils in 1862. Indigent blacks residing in the District could apprentice to service rather than attend schools, and the articles of apprenticeship usually required that students receive some academic instruction. Louise Carr, apprenticed in 1833 at the age of eleven to learn housewifery, was also to learn to read and write, while Sarah Buchan, bound to domestic service in 1837, was to be taught to read, write, and cipher up to subtraction.<sup>22</sup>

A handful of free blacks attended county-run free schools in Maryland. According to state law, only white children could attend free schools, yet school enrollment lists indicate that at least one county school accepted African-American students as well. Class rolls at William Mahan's school in Cecil County show that in 1823 he received payment from the Orphan Court of four dollars for two quarters' instruction of Elizabeth Hill, a "Coloured girl." The county paid the same rate for indigent white children whom Mahan taught. Maryland, moving out of a system of plantation agriculture, displayed a slightly more tolerant attitude toward anti-slavery activities than did its neighboring slave state, Virginia. The Missouri controversy fostered anti-slavery meetings in Baltimore in 1820, and the city joined several counties in sending memorials to the General Assembly over the next decade supporting gradual abolition. Self-interest motivated part of white concern with the education of free blacks: Marylanders deplored what they termed the low moral and physical condition of free blacks in Baltimore. Education, they argued, was necessary to prepare former slaves for freedom. Maryland's tolerance of equal education for the indigent white and black populations is remarkable given that even in New England, which had a negligible free black population, mob action forced Prudence Crandall to abandon her attempts either to provide integrated education or to run a school for free black young women in Canterbury, Connecticut, in 1833.<sup>23</sup>

Educational opportunities for free blacks in Virginia were limited even before the commonwealth forbade their education in 1831. In the state's largest cities, including Alexandria, Richmond, and Norfolk, authorities tolerated a few schools for free blacks, taught primarily by black teachers. These schools faced opposition from white Virginians, who feared they did not confine themselves to educating free persons. The example of one Richmond school illustrates the hostility of white inhabitants of the commonwealth to the education of slaves. In

1811, Christopher McPherson, a free black who called himself “Pherson, the first son of Christ,” hired a white schoolmaster and opened a coed night school in Richmond for free blacks and slaves who had the consent of their masters. McPherson’s pupils, numbering twenty-five and paying a monthly tuition of \$1.25, studied English grammar, writing, arithmetic, geometry, and astronomy from dusk until 9:30 each evening. The school grew quickly, and McPherson took out an ad in the *Richmond Argus* urging “the people of colour throughout the United States (who do not have it in their power to attend day schools) to establish similar institutions in their neighborhoods.” Several leading citizens declared it “impolitic and highly improper that such an institution should exist in this city,” and forced McPherson to withdraw his advertisements. Richmond officials then summoned McPherson to court to explain why his school should not be shut down as a public nuisance. Before his case came to court, the police arrested McPherson and sent him to the Williamsburg Lunatic Asylum. His “crazy” idea of educating Richmond’s black citizens ended with his confinement.<sup>24</sup>

In the aftermath of the Missouri Compromise and bloody slave rebellions, tolerance of schools serving the free African-American population waned. A rising tide of Negrophobia swept over the United States in the 1820s and 1830s, and states north and south began to curtail the rights of free blacks and slaves to learn to read and write. White northerners argued that allowing schools for African Americans in their neighborhoods would attract new black residents and lower the standards and morals of their towns. Consequently, they acted to limit educational opportunities for free blacks through force and through law. Southern states adopted similar policies. In Washington, opponents of African-American education took direct action, looting and demolishing schools for blacks during the Snow Riot on the night of August 5, 1835.<sup>25</sup>

The immediate cause of the Snow Riot was the alleged attempt of a slave to murder Mrs. William Thornton, the widow of the architect of the Capitol. But the riot’s underlying cause was the growing wealth of Washington’s free black community. Perhaps half a dozen free blacks, including restaurateur Beverly Snow and livery stable owner William Wormley, possessed assets of at least twenty thousand dollars. During the riot, gangs of white men and boys destroyed Snow’s restaurant, set fire to the school for free blacks owned by Wormley, demolished several tenements inhabited by African Americans, and broke the windows in a black church. Although no lives were lost, Wormley and his school’s teacher, William Thomas Lee, had to flee the district until President Andrew Jackson issued an order for their protection. If intimidation of the free black population had been the riot’s primary goal, it did not succeed—both Snow’s restaurant and Wormley’s school reopened after the riot.<sup>26</sup>

A majority of private schools open to free black young women in the Upper

South had African-American teachers who saw education as the key to the advancement of both individuals and the entire black community. Many undoubtedly hoped that ultimately their efforts would help undermine the system of slavery that still threatened their own freedom. Of forty-six schools in Washington, Virginia, and Maryland, that taught African Americans during the first four decades of the nineteenth century, at least twenty-six had an entirely black teaching staff.<sup>27</sup>

The men and women who opened schools for African Americans in the Upper South challenged strong white prejudice against giving free blacks any measure of social equality. In preparing black women to be educators and in offering instruction in classical languages or ornamental needlework, they acknowledged the emergence of a black middle class in the early nineteenth century. And ultimately, by proving the educability of African Americans and nurturing the development of leaders within the black community, teachers laid the groundwork for a moral challenge to slavery. The leading role African Americans took in establishing schools for children of their race suggests the importance African Americans attached to education's potential to end slavery.

African-American teachers came primarily from free black families who had prospered in the early republic. William Costin and his wife, manumitted by Eliza Parke Custis, owned a home on Capitol Hill and personal property that together amounted to more than thirteen hundred dollars by 1824. The Costins' seven children attended integrated schools in Washington, and the two youngest daughters, Martha and Frances, were students at a Catholic seminary in Baltimore, St. Frances Academy. Two of the Costins' daughters, Louisa and Martha, operated schools in their father's house in the 1820s and 1830s. Another teacher, Mary Wormley, was the sister of William Wormley. William sent Mary to Philadelphia to train as a teacher under the guidance of Sarah Douglass, a black abolitionist leader. Mary returned to Washington to teach in the schoolhouse her brother had built for her at the corner of Vermont and I streets.<sup>28</sup>

The membership of the Oblates of Providence indicates the range of class and educational backgrounds of educators in the early nineteenth century. The Oblates of Providence was a teaching order founded in 1828 by several black women whose families had fled from the revolution in Santo Domingo. The sisters played a leading role in providing education to black women from a broad range of class backgrounds in the nineteenth century.<sup>29</sup>

The Oblates stressed the importance of education for the women who joined their convent. Adopting a rule that teaching sisters must possess a "sufficient knowledge" of the branches of education they taught, the Oblates ordered teachers "to spare no pains to render themselves capable of fulfilling their duty in this respect." They wished their novices to be capable of teaching at least reading, writing, and simple arithmetic, but promised "a slender capacity will not be cause of

*Elizabeth Lange (Sister Mary), born and educated in Cuba or Santo Domingo, co-founded a Baltimore school for free black children run by the Oblate Sisters of Providence. The St. Frances Academy opened two years later and is still in operation today. (From Grace E. Sherwood, *The Oblates' Hundred and One Years* [New York: The Macmillan Co., 1931].)*



exclusion from the society, as it is hoped that exercise will render the employment more easy.”<sup>30</sup>

Several of the Oblates came from economically and educationally privileged families. Elizabeth Lange, one of the Oblates’ founders, had been born of racially mixed parentage in either Santo Domingo or Cuba and received a formal education before emigrating with her mother to the United States. Financial support from her father’s estate allowed Lange and her colleague Frances Balas to operate their own school before they established St. Frances Academy. Jane and Marie Louise Noel, who entered the convent in the 1830s, were daughters of innkeepers in Wilmington, Delaware. The girls attended a Quaker school in Wilmington before joining the Oblates’ order. Maria Becroft, who attended schools in Washington taught by two teachers from England, Henry Potter and Mary Billings, operated her own seminary in Georgetown for a decade. In 1831 she joined the Oblates and taught English, arithmetic, and embroidery for two years at St. Frances Academy before she died in 1833.<sup>31</sup>

In stark contrast to the privileged background of these women, other future Oblates began their lives as slaves. The baptismal record of Marie Germaine, for example, indicates that she had been born into slavery. Information about her life is incomplete, but by 1828, when she was twelve years old, Marie was receiving a

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## LIT LOG

**Littlemoser Michael, SE corner Preston and Penn ave**  
**Litton Thomas, sail maker, Bond, W side N of Wilk**  
**†Lively Wm. teacher, Caroline, W side S of Bank**  
**Liverpool, mrs Sophia, Wilk st E of Strawberry alley**  
**Livingston John, teacher, Little German, E of Sharp**  
**Livington Jno G. cordwainer, Forest st W side N of Doug-**  
**lass**

*William Lively listed his occupation in the city directory, where free blacks were distinguished by a cross preceding their names. (Matchett's Baltimore City Directory for 1827 [Baltimore: R. J. Matchett, 1827].)*

free education from the Oblates. In 1836, Marie entered the order as a novice, and became a teacher at the academy herself.<sup>32</sup>

Other black educators included men like William Levington and John Prout, who taught schools in Baltimore and Washington respectively. The records that exist for African-American teachers in the Upper South suggest, however, a teaching corps of primarily middle-class women who had attended private schools and become reasonably well educated in at least the "three R's." Many saw teaching as a long-term career, and one that could provide them with financial support as an alternative to marriage. Elizabeth Lange, for example, was probably in her forties and had been teaching for over a decade before she established the Oblates. Maria Costin, who opened her school after completing her own studies, taught for fifteen years and still shared her father's Capitol Hill home with two unmarried sisters in the 1870s.<sup>33</sup>

Many white educators who accepted black pupils occupied a social space slightly outside mainstream society because of their religion or their ethnicity. Perhaps this distance allowed them to view African Americans from a viewpoint different from that of other white Southerners. Of the seventeen identifiable white teachers in the Washington metropolitan region before 1835, one quarter were either English or Irish by birth. Antislavery sentiment had spread swiftly through Britain in the last quarter of the eighteenth century. In 1814 about 1.5 million out of a British population of approximately twelve million signed petitions advocating international abolition of the slave trade.<sup>34</sup>

In the Washington area, British-born teachers included Mary Billings, an Englishwoman, who taught both black and white children at the school she opened

in Washington around 1810. The opposition of white inhabitants to the existence of a mixed-race school prompted Billings to restrict her school to African Americans. She maintained a large school, attended by blacks of the middling class, until shortly before her death in 1826. Mary Haley, a native of Ireland who taught on Capitol Hill in the second and third decades of the nineteenth century, also conducted a mixed-race school until complaining neighbors forced the black pupils to withdraw.<sup>35</sup>

Religious beliefs separated another white teacher, Mary Wall, from most citizens of her native Virginia. A Quaker, Wall was a member of a religious society that condemned slavery and the slave trade on moral grounds. After her husband died she left Virginia to support herself and her son by teaching a co-educational school for African-American children in the District of Columbia. Wall's opposition to slavery divided her from her neighbors on an issue that increasingly defined southern society.<sup>36</sup>

Quakers and Catholics in Washington and Maryland, as well as in more northern states, worked actively in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries to improve the conditions of blacks. At least two of the three orders of white Roman Catholic nuns operating schools in Maryland and Washington in the first few decades of the nineteenth century also offered at least rudimentary education to African-American pupils. Although the Visitation nuns in Georgetown and the Sisters of Charity in Emmitsburg, Maryland, both held slaves, the two orders also educated African Americans. Both white and black poor residents of Emmitsburg came to the Sisters of Charity for religious education. Mother Elizabeth Ann Seton taught the black pupils in a separate class, perhaps to assuage local prejudice. Records do not indicate whether the African-American pupils were free or enslaved. Evidence suggests, too, that the Visitation sisters might have taught both black and white pupils at their charity school during the first few decades of the nineteenth century, until public disapproval forced an end to the practice.<sup>37</sup>

Historians have argued that the Catholic church in the nineteenth century South followed a path of political caution. Already identified as "foreign" and therefore dangerous, church leaders preferred not to challenge social and political custom in the United States. Thus, rather than condemn slavery, the Catholic church in America provided biblical justifications for the system of bondage. Some Catholic nuns in the South, however, departed sharply from these apologists for slavery. Freed from social conventions by their vows of poverty and celibacy, women religious could live the gospel value of charity and challenge the ideas of female dependency and weakness. The sisters took this opportunity to challenge laws and customs that restricted the education of black pupils. White sisters also formed important connections with black Catholic women. The Visitation sisters, for example, provided assistance to Maria BeCraft after they closed

their own school. While Catholic priests held considerable influence over the internal affairs of congregations, women could challenge these strictures, as the Oblates did in the 1830s.<sup>38</sup>

In attempting to operate integrated schools, white women such as Mary Billings and the Catholic sisters deliberately challenged racial bias that might have appeared to them to be analogous to the prejudice they faced in their own lives. Like Maria Haley, many of the Visitation Sisters also came from Ireland. Their Irish nativity might have particularly inclined them to challenge bigotry, since they were themselves members of an ethnic group long considered “barbaric” and “primitive” by the English government. Elizabeth Ann Seton had faced discrimination in her life; when she converted to Catholicism, parents withdrew their children from her school in her native New York City. Seton had to move to Maryland to escape religious intolerance.<sup>39</sup>

At least some of the white and black educators who taught African-American pupils apparently agreed on the need to end slavery. While none of these teachers has left behind signed abolitionist writings, circumstantial evidence does suggest their antislavery feelings.

Many Baltimore teachers at schools for African Americans advertised in the *Genius of Universal Emancipation*, the abolitionist newspaper published by the Quaker Benjamin Lundy in the city in the 1820s and 1830s. Among the teachers whose ads appeared in the pages of the *Genius* were Churchman and Leeke and the Oblates, as well as William Lively.<sup>40</sup> Their willingness to associate themselves with the *Genius* in a slave state suggests the antislavery convictions of these teachers.

Personal experience undoubtedly played an important role in convincing African-American teachers of the need to end slavery. Marie Germaine and Laurette Noel, both Oblates, had been born into slavery. Other teachers, including Louisa and Martha Costin and Laurette Noel’s daughters Jane and Marie Louise, had parents who had been enslaved. In addition to Marie Germaine, other freed slaves whom the Oblates taught included Almaide and Angelica Gideon and Virginia Ann Foreman. Thus, many black teachers were well acquainted with the institution of slavery and saw educating free blacks as a way to challenge the institution of slavery, to prepare free blacks to support themselves, and to lessen prejudice against African Americans. By demonstrating that African Americans were “as rich in intellect as the whites,” teachers and pupils could weaken one of the pillars that supported slavery, the supposed mental inferiority of non-whites. Through giving skills to their pupils and encouraging them to work industriously, teachers could enable them to support themselves and refute the notion that African-Americans would work only when slavery forced them to do so. A more distant hope was that white Southerners who became convinced of the intelligence of African Americans would decide to oppose slavery as well.<sup>41</sup>

In this effort, the teachers of African-American pupils and their supporters

understood the importance of finding supporters who would bear witness to the accomplishments of their pupils. Every year, William Lively invited the public to attend his pupils' examination. In 1829 the *Genius of Universal Emancipation* pointedly directed those "who persist in debasing the intellect and capacity of our colored population to step in [Lively's] school, and try if they can argue against fact." Public displays of the literary attainments of African Americans would, the black community and white sympathizers hoped, dispel the strong prejudice against their academic education.<sup>42</sup>

In the early nineteenth century, white and black Americans accepted the idea that schools could prepare children to attain higher social levels.<sup>43</sup> By preparing young women to be teachers, the black community began to prepare young women to challenge social prejudice that kept them in the least skilled and least desirable jobs. By instilling in female pupils the values and homemaking skills of middle-class housewives, the community challenged the idea that only white women could be "ladies."

Educated black women received mixed messages about their expected roles in the Upper South. Some supporters argued that intelligent, articulate, and literate African Americans would help dispel white prejudice against free blacks, improve the status of all freed men and women, and ultimately weaken the institution of slavery. This last step was precisely the impact that pro-slavery advocates feared. Other white southerners expected education to have a more limited impact, with black women continuing to work in menial jobs and exerting their influence only within their families and the black community rather than reaching beyond it. Along with whites, blacks also debated the extent to which women should hold public roles in southern society.

Abolitionists and black leaders stressed the teaching role played by black women, as both mothers and school proprietors. In 1829 the *Genius of Universal Emancipation* reminded its readers that the business of education was a vast enterprise and the need for teachers was constantly increasing. "But while there are so many pursuits more lucrative and agreeable to active and ambitious young men, there will be a lack of *good* instructors," it continued. "Let, then, the employment of *school-keeping* be principally appropriated to females." With a better education, the newspaper argued, women would demonstrate their intellectual capability and their capacity to serve as suitable instructors of youth. Just as Catharine Beecher was calling on white women to improve the ranks of the teaching profession, the *Genius* editorial advised its black readers that by temper and habit women were admirably suited for the important task of instruction. By shunning "superficial" and "frivolous" acquirements, women could devote themselves to the serious studies necessary to fit them to be excellent teachers.<sup>44</sup>

Maria W. Stewart, a black political writer in Massachusetts, argued in the *Liberator* in 1831 that if women stored their minds "with useful knowledge, great



*Early home of the Oblates on South George St. (Sherwood, The Oblates' Hundred and One Years.)*

would be [their] influence." She encouraged women to teach their own children, and to hire private teachers to instruct them in higher branches in order to improve each generation and to burst "the chains of slavery and ignorance." Urging women to instill virtue in the African-American population, Stewart asserted that upon women's "exertions almost entirely depend[ed] whether the rising generation shall be any thing more than we have been or not."<sup>45</sup> Stewart, like Beecher, contended that women's virtue, piety, and morality particularly suited them for leading roles as educators.

Of course, not all black women planned teaching careers. Most were mothers, instructing only their children. Some women became members of benevolent societies for black women, such as the Union Female Society of Baltimore, founded in 1821.<sup>46</sup> Educated black women, like educated white women, were to share in the responsibility of providing for the welfare and training of indigent members of their race. Black leaders demanded that these women, who had themselves been favored in fortune or birth, share the educational benefits they had received with others in the community.<sup>47</sup>

Yet, not all proponents of education for black children agreed that women

should hold leadership roles in the black community. Educators who subscribed to a hierarchical world view feared making black women discontented with the subordinate roles they played both as African Americans and as women. The same editorialist in the *Genius of Universal Emancipation* who called for women to be teachers also argued that the “great effort of female education should be to qualify woman to discharge her duties, not to exalt her till she despises them.” Educators at schools for both white and black girls tried to instill in their charges the meekness and humility that seemed peculiarly becoming to Christian women. At schools for black young women, training in the humble skills of washing and ironing reinforced the low position of black women in the social hierarchy.<sup>48</sup>

Father Nicholas Joubert, co-founder of the Oblates of Providence and a strong supporter of education for black women, nevertheless envisioned a limited role for the graduates of St. Frances Academy. In the school’s prospectus, he argued that the Oblates’ pupils would “either become mothers of families or domestic servants.” In discussing how valuable Oblates’ graduates would be as “servants . . . to their masters,” Joubert even used the language of slavery, underscoring the subordinate place of even free black women in the South. He sought a strong role of influence for these women as they raised their own children or assisted with the children of their employers, although he did not envision the school’s graduates rising above the roles of service that seemed to be their birth-right.<sup>49</sup>

But the order Joubert helped found played a crucial role in preparing women for leadership roles as teachers. While teacher training schools were rare in the early nineteenth century, the Oblates trained several teachers who opened seminaries in the capital region in the 1830s; the education pupils received in both academic and ornamental subjects under the Oblates permitted them to offer advanced classes at their schools. Arabella Jones, who attended the Oblates’ school and later established St. Agnes Academy in the District, was proficient in French and music, and had studied English literature. Other former Oblates’ pupils teaching in the capital were Martha Costin and Elizabeth Brown, who assisted at Ellen Woods’ school. Martha Berry established a school in Baltimore. At least nine pupils who attended St. Frances Academy before 1835 later joined the order and took on their own classes at the school. They undoubtedly taught their pupils the same lessons of literacy, housewifery, and “religious principles and . . . habits of modesty, honesty, and integrity” that they had learned from the Oblates.<sup>50</sup>

It is difficult to gauge the opinions of African Americans about the schools available to them. Few letters, diaries, or other written records documenting their thoughts exist in public archives. Literacy rates correlate to socioeconomic status; members of the poorest strata of society have the highest rates of illiteracy. Undoubtedly, the parents of many children attending these schools were themselves illiterate and could not have read letters from their daughters had the children

sent any.<sup>51</sup> Moreover, few of the schools included boarding facilities—most were day schools, obviating the need for written communication between parents and children.

Nevertheless, the growth in the number of schools for free blacks, the large enrollment of many of the schools, and the support provided to these schools by a free black population with limited economic resources demonstrate the significance free blacks in the Upper South attached to female education. In a newspaper advertisement, the Resolute Beneficial Society, founded by some of Washington's leading black men in 1818, expressed its faith that the free black community would recognize the importance of its new school. "It is presumed," society members wrote, "that free colored families will embrace the advantages thus presented to them, either by subscribing to the funds of the society or by sending their children to the school." The Oblates of Providence accepted students as *pensionnaires*—who helped with the housework in exchange for receiving room, board and education—if they could not pay the school's tuition costs. The tuition charged at some of the seminaries open to African Americans could have riven the black community in the Upper South by providing some free blacks the chance to improve their conditions while leaving those unable to pay tuition to sink farther both socially and economically. The effort of African Americans to make education available to a broader class of students further indicates that they saw education as key to the uplift of the entire race.<sup>52</sup>

This pattern of sacrificing in order to attain education continued in the next generation of southern free black women, as the career of Fanny Jackson Coppin illustrates. Coppin was born into slavery in Washington in 1837 but was freed at a young age by an aunt. She worked as a servant in households in Massachusetts and Rhode Island while sporadically attending colored schools—she had an hour free every other afternoon to study. Coppin later said that she had an urge to "get an education and become a teacher to my people." After graduating from the Rhode Island State Normal School, Coppin became the second black woman to obtain a bachelor's degree from Oberlin College, graduating in 1865. "I never rose to recite in my classes at Oberlin but I felt that I had the honor of the whole African race upon my shoulders. I felt that, should I fail, it would be ascribed to the fact that I was colored," Coppin wrote. Coppin had a distinguished career as a teacher and a principal at the Institute for Colored Youth in Philadelphia. Her success helped pave the way for later black women educators, including Anna Julia Cooper, who received bachelor's and master's degrees from Oberlin in the 1880s.<sup>53</sup>

Educators in the early nineteenth century laid the groundwork for the accomplishments of Coppin and Cooper. By establishing free schools for the poor, training middle-class black women in the same "higher branches" that their white counterparts learned, and encouraging young women to become teachers themselves, black and white supporters of education for African Americans sought to spread

literacy and virtue through the black community. As teachers and as mothers, women played key roles in the transmission of knowledge and values among free blacks. By acquiring the skills possessed by educated “ladies,” black women sought to improve the status the white community accorded to them. Through their efforts, these educated black women trained a new generation of leaders and challenged the false premise of black inferiority upon which slavery rested.

#### NOTES

1. Carl F. Kaestle, *Pillars of the Republic: Common Schools and American Society, 1780–1860* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1983), 39–40, 60, 14–15. Kaestle argues that the highest proportion of school attendance was in the small towns of the North; in rural New York, he estimates, 37 percent of children under twenty were enrolled in schools in 1800, rising to 60 percent in 1825; Kaestle, *Pillars of the Republic*, 24. On education in the early republic, see also, Lawrence A. Cremin, *American Education: The National Experience, 1783–1876* (New York: Harper & Row, 1980).
2. Linda K. Kerber, *Women of the Republic: Intellect and Ideology in Revolutionary America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press for the Institute of Early American History and Culture, 1980), 189–231; Joan M. Jensen, “Not Only Ours But Others: The Quaker Teaching Daughters of the Mid-Atlantic, 1790–1850,” *History of Education Quarterly*, 24 (1984): 3–19.
3. Suzanne Lebsock, *Free Women of Petersburg: Status and Culture in a Southern Town, 1784–1860* (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 1984), 99–103. A majority of free blacks living in the Upper South were female, a statistic that meant many women had to find the means to support themselves; Ira Berlin, *Slaves Without Masters: The Free Negro in the Antebellum South* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1974), 177.
4. Berlin, *Slaves Without Masters*, 101.
5. On black education in the Upper South, see U.S. Office of Education, *Special Report of the Commissioner of Education on the Condition and Improvement of Public Schools in the District of Columbia* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1871); C. G. Woodson, *The Education of the Negro Prior to 1861: A History of the Education of the Colored People of the United States from the Beginning of Slavery to the Civil War*, 2nd ed. (Washington, D.C.: The Associated Publishers, 1919); Grace M. Sherwood, *The Oblates’ Hundred and One Years* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1931); Berlin, *Slaves without Masters*; Barbara Misner, SCSC, “Highly Respectable and Accomplished Ladies”: *Catholic Women Religious in America, 1790–1850* (New York: Garland Publishing Inc., 1988); Diane Batts Morrow, “The Oblate Sisters of Providence: Issues of Black and Female Agency in their Antebellum Experience” (PhD diss., University of Georgia-Athens, 1996).
6. Thomas Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia* (Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1976; orig. pub., 1861; first printed, 1785), 132–39; Eric L. McKittrick, ed., *Slavery Defended: The Views of the Old South* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1963), 122–23; see also, Larry E. Tise, *Proslavery: A History of the Defense of Slavery in America, 1701–1840* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1987), xv, 107–10. On the paternalism of slaveholders, see Eugene D. Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaveholders Made* (New York: Vintage Books, 1971), 3–7.
7. Winthrop D. Jordan, *White over Black: American Attitudes Toward the Negro, 1550–1812*

- (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press for the Institute of Early American History and Culture, 1968), 442–43.
8. Anonymous, “Education of the Colored People,” *Genius of Universal Emancipation*, August 16, 1826.
  9. James Brewer Stewart, *Holy Warriors: The Abolitionists and American Slavery*, rev. ed. (New York: Hill and Wang, 1997), 11–33.
  10. Allan Kulikoff, *Tobacco and Slaves: The Development of Southern Cultures in the Chesapeake, 1680–1800* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press for the Institute of Early American History and Culture, 1986), 428–32; Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Negro Population, 1790–1915* (Washington, D.C.: Bureau of the Census, 1918), 57. On the promulgation of laws against free blacks, see, Berlin, *Slaves Without Masters*; Jane Purcell Guild, *Black Laws of Virginia: A Summary of the Legislative Acts of Virginia Concerning Negroes from Earliest Times to the Present* (New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969; orig. pub. 1936).
  11. Herbert Aptheker, *Nat Turner’s Slave Rebellion, Together with the Full Text of the so-called “Confessions” of Nat Turner made in person in 1831* (New York: Published for A.I.M.S. by Humanities Press, [1966]), 127–52; David M. Potter, *The Impending Crisis, 1848–1861* (New York: Harper and Row, 1976), 454; *Supplement to the Revised Code of the Laws of Virginia: Being a Collection of All the Acts of the General Assembly of a Public and Permanent Nature, Passed Since the Year 1819, With a General Index* (Richmond: Printed by Samuel Shepard & Co., 1833), 245; Guild, *Black Laws of Virginia*, 112; Robert J. Brugger, *Maryland: A Middle Temperament, 1634–1980* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press for the Maryland Historical Society, 1988), 266. On the obstacles African Americans in the Upper South faced as they sought educational opportunities, see also Henry Allen Bullock, *A History of Negro Education in the South: From 1619 to the Present* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1967), 13–15; Thomas L. Webber, *Deep Like the River: Education in the Slave Quarter Community, 1831–1865* (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 1978), 44; Jane Duitsman Cornelius, “When I Can Read My Title Clear”: *Literacy, Slavery, and Religion in the Antebellum South* (Columbia, S.C.: University of South Carolina Press, 1991), 12, 15, 32–33; Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, 323–55; Frederick Douglass, *Frederick Douglass: The Narrative and Other Writings*, ed., Michael Meyer (New York: Random House, 1984), 46–48.
  12. On the schools that provided education to African Americans, see U.S. Office of Education, *Special Report*, passim; Woodson, *Education of the Negro Prior to 1861*, passim; M. B. Goodwin, *History of Schools for the Colored Population* (New York: Arno Press and the New York Times, 1969), passim; and *The Genius of Universal Emancipation*, ed. Benjamin Lundy, 1825–1831. In addition to claiming improved educational opportunities in order to be republican mothers, in the early nineteenth century women also demanded better educations in order to be evangelical women. Kerber, *Women of the Republic*, 185–231; Leonard I. Sweet, “The Female Seminary Movement and Women’s Mission in Antebellum America,” *Church History*, 54 (1985): 41–55. Women also began to organize into benevolent societies; see Nancy F. Cott, *The Bonds of Womanhood: “Woman’s Sphere” in New England, 1780–1855* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977), 140–46, 149–59; Lebsack, *Free Women of Petersburg*, 195–236.

On women’s education in the South in particular, see Christie Anne Farnham, *The Education of the Southern Belle: Higher Education and Student Socialization in the Antebellum South* (New York: New York University Press, 1994); Mary Carroll Johansen, “‘Female Instruction and Improvement’: Education for Young Women in Maryland, Virginia, and the District of Columbia, 1785–1835” (PhD diss., College of William and Mary, 1996).

13. U.S. Office of Education, *Special Report*, 197–98. Of the forty-six schools in my study, approximately one-quarter offered instruction beyond the three R's; advertisements for several other schools do not list the classes taught, so it is possible that the number of schools providing advanced classes is actually slightly larger than one in four.
14. Advertisements for the "Union Seminary," February 11, 1826, May 24, 1828, July 12, 1828, July 26, 1828, *Genius of Universal Emancipation*.
15. Advertisements for the "Union Seminary," July 26, 1828, "H. J. Churchman and C. Leeke's School for Girls," February 25, 1826, and January 26, 1828, "Education," August 25, 1827. Tuition at Churchman and Leeke's school was \$3 to \$8 per quarter.
16. "H. J. Churchman and C. Leeke's School for Girls," February 25, 1826, and "Union Seminary," May 24, 1828, *Genius of Universal Emancipation*.
17. Advertisements for "Female Department," *United States Telegraph*, September 19, 1832, "Charlottesville Female Academy," *Richmond Enquirer*, January 3, 1826; see also "Monte Video Female Seminary," *Rockingham Register*, November 9, 1833.
18. Advertisements for "H. J. Churchman and C. Leeke's School for Girls," February 25, 1826, the Union Seminary, May 24, 1828, and the School for Girls of Color, January 8, 1829, *Genius of Universal Emancipation*; and Woodson, *Education of the Negro*, 134. Barbara Miller Solomon points out that while female educators wanted to prove women could undertake any course of study that men learned, efforts to include ancient languages in the curricula of female academies met with initial opposition. But, according to Thomas Woody, by the period 1830 to 1870, the best female institutions offered most of the classes taught at men's colleges. Solomon, *In the Company of Educated Women: A History of Women and Higher Education in America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), 22–23; Woody, *A History of Women's Education in the United States*, I (New York: Octagon Books Inc., 1966; orig. pub. 1929), Appendix II.
19. Farnham, *Education of the Southern Belle*, 3.
20. Advertisements for: "Education," August 25, 1827, "H. J. Churchman and C. Leeke's Schools for Girls," January 26, 1828, and "School for Girls of Color," January 8, 1829, *Genius of Universal Emancipation*; Deborah Gray White, *Ar'n't I a Woman?: Female Slaves in the Plantation South* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1985), 27–46; Giddings, *When and Where I Enter: The Impact of Black Women on Race and Sex in America* (New York: Quill, 1984), 85–89.
21. "A Report of the Orphanine Charity School of Baltimore" (1919), 2, Jonas R. Rappeport Collection, Records of the Baltimore Charity Schools and Homes, 1807–1881, SC 731, Maryland State Archives; Joel Spring, *The American School, 1642–1990: Varieties of Historical Interpretation of the Foundations and Development of American Education*, 4th ed. (New York: Longman, 1990), 50–51, 53, 57–59.
22. Letitia Woods Brown, *Free Negroes in the District of Columbia, 1790–1846* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972), 136–37. On the increasingly restrictive laws governing free blacks in the Upper and Lower South in the nineteenth century, see Berlin, *Slaves Without Masters*, 99.
23. Office of Education, *Special Report*, 65; Receipt of William Mahan, April 7, 1823, Cecil Co., Md., Orphans Court Papers, Duke University; Brugger, *Middle Temperament*, 210–11; Philip S. Foner and Josephine F. Pacheco, *Three Who Dared: Prudence Crandall, Margaret Douglass, Myrtilla Miner—Champions of Antebellum Black Education* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1984), 9–30. For a discussion of slavery's decline in Maryland, see Brugger, *Middle Temperament*, 11, 12–13, 206–15. The receipt for Mahan's school shows that he also received tuition payments for two "Coloured" boys.

24. Goodwin, *History of Schools*, 283, 394; Charles L. Perdue et al., eds., *Weevils in the Wheat: Interviews with Virginia Ex-slaves* (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1976), 18; Berlin, *Slaves Without Masters*, 76–78.
25. Gary B. Nash, *Forging Freedom: The Formation of Philadelphia's Black Community, 1720–1840* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1988), 223–25, 326–329, esp. 273–74; Cornelius, “When I Can Read My Title Clear,” 29; Foner and Pacheco, *Three Who Dared*, xiv, xvi; U.S. Office of Education, *Special Report*, 65.
26. *National Intelligencer*, August 6, 11–15, 20, 28, 1835; David L. Lewis, *District of Columbia: A Bicentennial History* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1976), 48; Constance McLaughlin Green, *Washington, I, Village and Capital, 1800–1878* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1962), 141–42; U.S. Office of Education, *Special Report*, 65, 212.
27. U.S. Office of Education, *Special Report*, 65, 195–215; Woodson, *Education of the Negro*, 136.
28. William Costin, 4th Ward, Corporation of Washington, Tax Book, 1824, Record Group 351, Records of the District of Columbia, National Archives; Office of Education, *Special Report*, 203–4, 211–12; Mary Wormley, William Wormley, 1st Ward, Corporation of Washington, Tax Book, 1831, Record Group 351, Records of the District of Columbia, National Archives.
29. Sherwood, *Oblates' Hundred and One Years*, 22–23.
30. Batts Morrow, “Oblate Sisters,” Appendix I.
31. Batts Morrow, “Oblate Sisters,” 26–27, 96–98; Office of Education, *Special Report*, 204; “A Translation of the Original Diary of the Oblate Sisters of Providence,” December 16, 1833, Archives of the Josephite Fathers, Baltimore, Maryland.
32. Batts Morrow, “Oblate Sisters,” 154–55; “Enfants recus gratuitement,” Fr. Joubert’s Account Book, Oblate Sisters of Providence Archives, Baltimore, Md.; Chronology of the Members of the Sisters of Providence, Oblate Sisters of Providence Archives.
33. U.S. Census Office, Fifth Census, 1830, Baltimore City; Office of Education, *Special Report*, 199, 204; Batts Morrow, “Oblate Sisters,” 26–27.
34. U.S. Office of Education, *Special Report*, 65, 196, 198, 199, 212; James Walvin, *England, Slaves and Freedom, 1776–1838* (Jackson: University of Mississippi Press, 1986), 97, 126.
35. U.S. Office of Education, *Special Report*, 199, 196.
36. *Ibid.*, 212.
37. Woodson, *Education of the Negro*, 108; U.S. Office of Education, *Special Report*, 196, 199; Sister Mary Regis Hoare, *Virgin Soil: Mother Seton from a Different Point of View* (Boston: Christopher Publishing House, 1942), 129–30; Mada-Anne Gell, VHM, “Georgetown Visitation: The Myth of the Visiting School,” *Salesian Living Heritage* (Spring, 1986), 34–36. Records do not indicate whether Seton taught her pupils to read in addition to giving them religious instruction, but it was typical for Sunday schools to teach reading to enable their pupils to review the catechism on their own.
38. Richard R. Duncan, “Catholics and the Church in the Upper South,” 87, Ronald M. Miller, “The Failed Mission: The Catholic Church and Black Catholics in the Old South,” 152, 156–57, and Sister Frances Jerome Woods, C.D.P., “Congregations of Religious Women in the Old South,” 109, 122, in Randall M. Miller and Jon L. Wakelyn, eds., *Catholics in the Old South: Essays on Church and Culture* (Macon, Ga.: Mercer University Press, 1983).
39. U.S. Office of Education, *Special Report*, 296, Gell, “Georgetown Visitation,” *Salesian Living Heritage*, 31; Nicholas Canny, *Kingdom and Colony: Ireland in the Atlantic World, 1560–1800* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1988), 35–37; Hoare, *Virgin Soil*, 40.
40. “H. J. Churchman and C. Leeke’s School for Girls,” February 25, 1826, “A School for Girls

of Color," January 8, 1829, "Union Seminary," May 24, 1828, *Genius of Universal Emancipation*. Other teachers advertising in the pages of the *Genius* included William Kelsey (August 25, 1827) and J. J. Thompson (July 19, 1828).

41. Batts Morrow, "Oblate Sisters," 155, 156; "Education of the Colored People," *Genius of Universal Emancipation*, August 12, 1826. On the alleged laziness of slaves, see Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, 298–309.
42. "Union Seminary," July 26, 1828, "African School," November 6, 1829, *Genius of Universal Emancipation*.
43. Spring, *American School*, 51.
44. "Female Education," *Genius of Universal Emancipation*, September 2, 1829; Catharine Beecher, *Suggestions Regarding Improvements in Education Presented to the Trustees of the Hartford Female Seminary* (Hartford, Conn., 1829).

As Suzanne Lebsock points out, free black women had few employment opportunities in the early nineteenth century; most became seamstresses or washers. Lebsock, *Free Women of Petersburg*, 97–99. Teaching was a skilled and more "respectable" occupation, but it was an option available to only a small number of African-American women.

45. Maria W. Stewart, *Maria W. Stewart, America's First Black Woman Political Writer: Essays and Speeches*, ed. Marilyn Richardson (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), 31–32, 36, 30, 55.
  46. "Education of the Colored People," *Genius of Universal Emancipation*, August 26, 1826.
  47. See also Stewart, *America's First Black Woman Political Writer*, ed. Richardson, 127–28.
  48. "Female Education," September 2, 1829, "School for Girls of Color," January 8, 1829, *Genius of Universal Emancipation*.
  49. Sherwood, *Oblates' Hundred and One Years*, 35–36; Batts Morrow, "Oblate Sisters," Appendix 1.
  50. Sherwood, *Oblates' Hundred and One Years*, 34, 36.
  51. Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, 563.
  52. U.S. Office of Education, *Special Report*, 197–98; "Translation of the Oblates' Diary," January 1, 1836. For a discussion of education as a benefit to the African-American race, see Linda Perkins, "Black Women and Race 'Uplift' Prior to Emancipation," *Black Women in United States History: From Colonial Times Through the Nineteenth Century*, ed. Darlene Clark Hine (Brooklyn, NY: Carlson Publishing, 1990), 3:1077–94.
- Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham notes the hegemonic nature of "race uplift" in "African-American Women's History and the Metalanguage of Race," *Signs*, 17 (1992): 271–72.
53. Leslie S. Fishel Jr., "Fanny Jackson Coppin," *Notable American Women 1607–1950*, I, ed., Edward T. James et al. (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1971), 383–85; Bert James Loewenberg and Ruth Bogin, ed., *Black Women in Nineteenth-Century American Life* (University Park: Penn State University Press, 1976), 306; Solomon, *In the Company of Educated Women*, 76.



## Portfolio

# Edgar Allan Poe's Baltimore



Nineteenth-century poet and author Edgar Allan Poe (1801–49) was one of the most renowned American writers, yet numerous myths surround his life. One such myth suggests that Poe's residence in Baltimore was a lengthy one, yet the writer lived in Baltimore only briefly, from 1831 to 1836. In the years prior to and following his sojourn in Baltimore, Poe also lived and worked in Boston, New York, and Richmond.

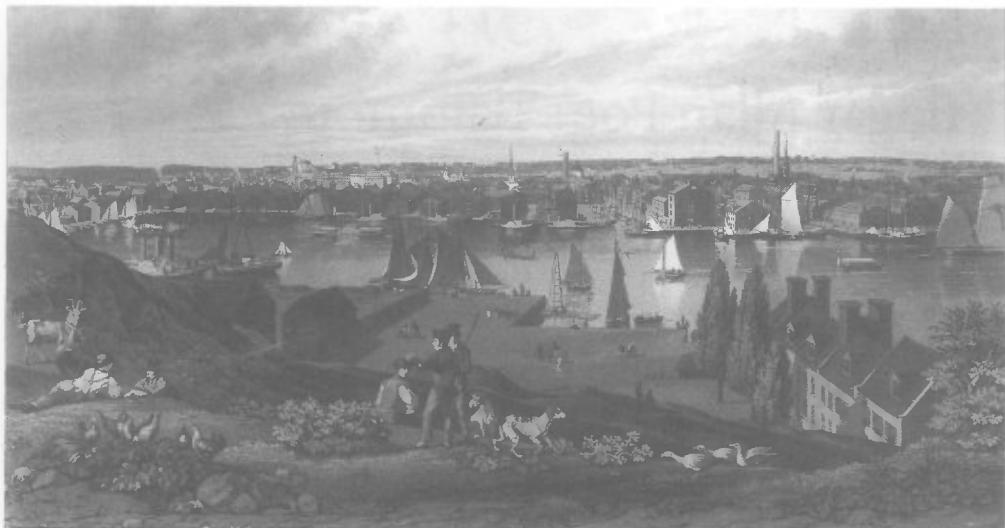
Born in Boston in 1809, Poe was raised in Richmond by merchant John Allan, following the death of his parents. While studying at the University of Virginia, Edgar's relationship with his foster father became strained when the youth refused to study law. Poe left the university and went to Boston, where he

began his literary career, publishing *Tamerlane and Other Poems* (1827). The author lived briefly in New York, and then traveled to Baltimore in 1831.

Edgar lived in Baltimore with his aunt, Maria Clemm, and her daughter Virginia, and began to publish short fiction in magazines. Poe wrote the story "MS in a Bottle" in 1833, and received first prize in a contest judged by John Pendleton Kennedy. In 1835, Kennedy found Poe an editorial position with the *Southern Literary Messenger*.

Following Poe's marriage, in 1836, to his thirteen-year-old-cousin, Virginia, Edgar moved to Richmond. He continued writing for the *Messenger*, publishing essays, poems, stories, and reviews. Over the next twelve years, Poe traveled between New York, Philadelphia, and Richmond, producing numerous works of gothic fiction. In 1849, Poe began a three-month lecture tour to raise funds for a proposed magazine, but then fell ill. Later that year, Poe returned to Baltimore, where he died.

*Opposite: Dedication of the Edgar Allan Poe monument in Westminster Cemetery, Baltimore, 1875.*



*Baltimore from Federal Hill, 1829. Poe returned this same year and made his home among the city's literary lights.*

*Maria Clemm moved her family to this house on Amity Street in 1833; the Poe House.*

Museum. Edgar lived here with Maria, Virginia, and Grandmother Poe, developing relationships that sustained him for the rest of his life. Maria later wrote, "the three of us lived for each other."



While Poe's name is often associated with works of horror, he also wrote made-to-order poetry for the albums of Baltimore belles. One young woman, Lucy Holmes Balderston, received the only known copy of Poe's poem, "Alone," which resides in the Manuscripts Department of the Maryland Historical Society. This chilling poem invokes the dark, gothic style for which Poe is known.



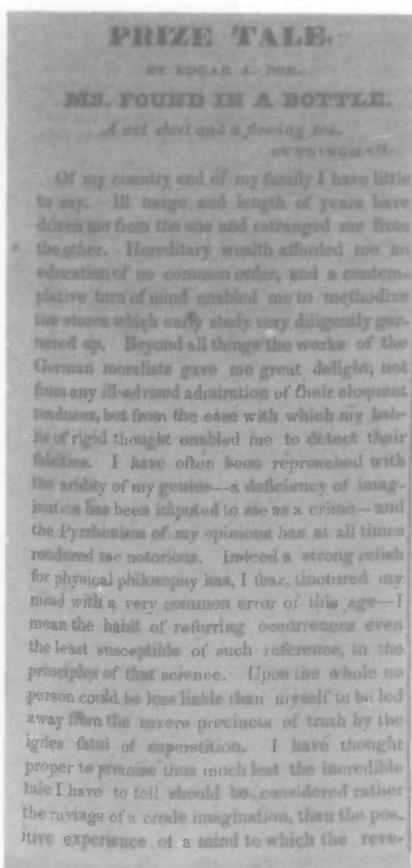
"Alone"

*Original*

55

From childhood lone & have not been  
Of others care - I have not seen  
The others saw - I could not bring  
My happiness from a common string -  
From the same source I have not taken  
My sorrow - & could not awaken  
My heart to joy at the same time -  
And all alone - I lone alone -  
These - in my childhood - in the fancy  
Of a most stormy life - a world around  
From every breath of good or ill  
The mystery which built me out -  
From the torrent, on the plain land -  
From the red cliff of the mountains -  
From the sun that round me roll'd  
In its autumn tint of gold -  
From the lightning in the sky  
As it passed like flying by -  
From the thunder & the storm -  
And the flood that took the form  
(When the rest of Heaven was lost)  
Of a demon in my view -

E. A. Poe



The Saturday Visitor published Poe's poetry in 1833. The author won a \$50 prize for his short story "Ms. Found in a Bottle" the same year.



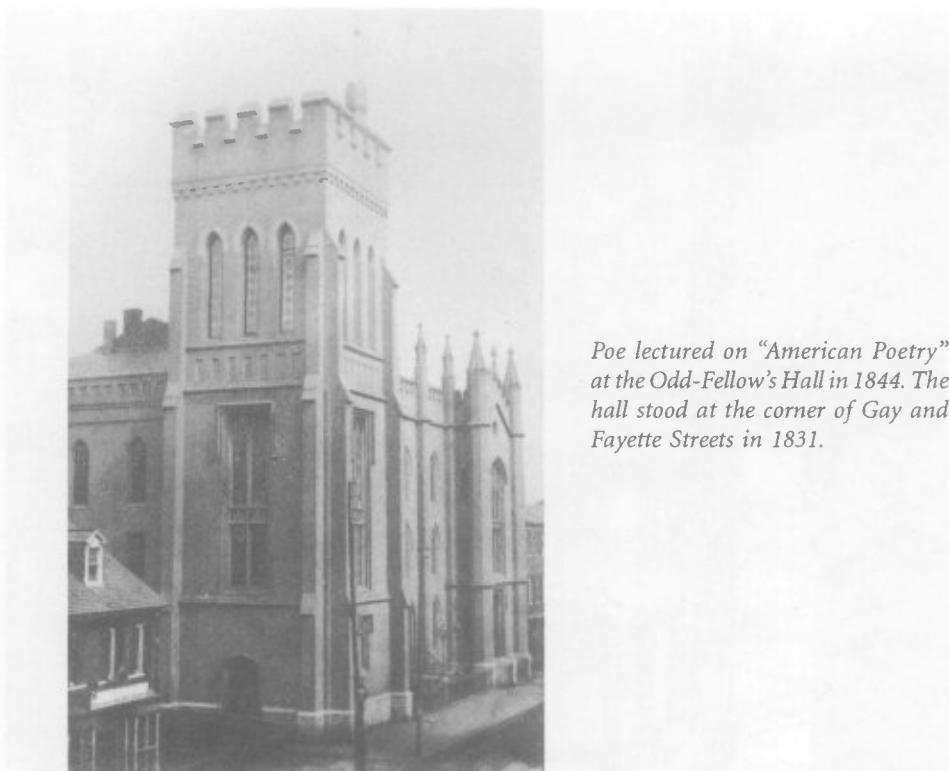
*John Pendleton Kennedy sponsored the struggling poet and helped him secure an editorial position in Richmond with the Southern Literary Messenger, in 1835. Kennedy later wrote, "I found him in a state of starvation [and] gave him clothing, free access to my table, and the use of a horse for exercise when he chose; in fact brought him up from the very verge of despair. He always remembered me with gratitude."*

Baltimore's less well-known literary figures met at the Seven Stars Tavern on Water Street near Marketplace.



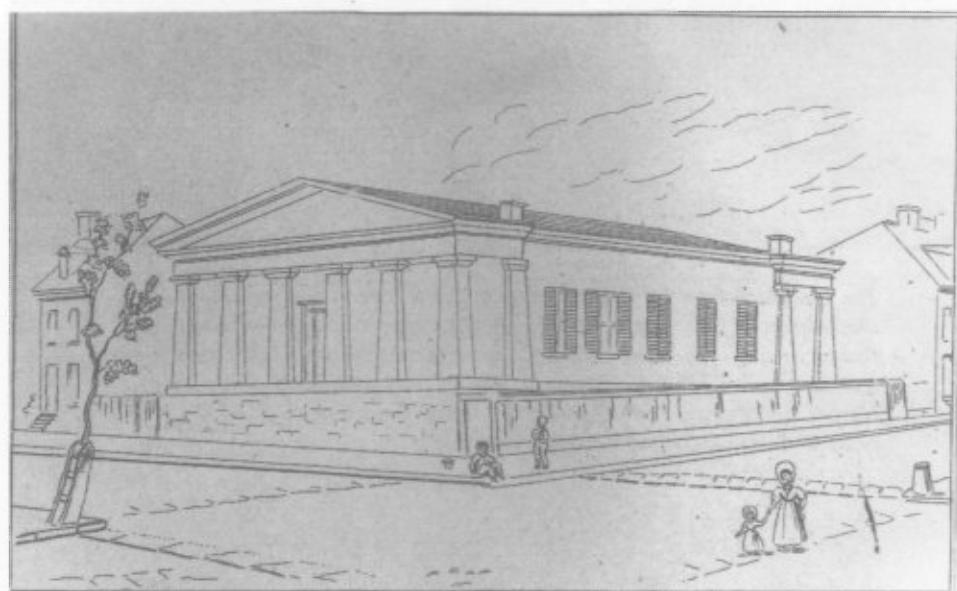


The *Tusculum*, home of Portico editor William Gwynn and meeting place of the Delphians, Baltimore's elite literary club. Members gathered weekly and shared writings, food, and drink in a pseudo-classical atmosphere rich in wit and satire. John Pendleton Kennedy, John H. B. Latrobe, Robert Goodloe Harper, and Francis Scott Key belonged to the group. Poe modeled his fictional Folio Club after the Delphian Club.



Poe lectured on "American Poetry" at the Odd-Fellow's Hall in 1844. The hall stood at the corner of Gay and Fayette Streets in 1831.

Poe applied for a job at Male Public School No. 3 but found the position filled.





Poe met with journalists and friends at Guy's Monument House Hotel on Calvert Street's Monument Square. The hotel occupied this site from 1820 to 1888. Charles Dickens also visited this local haunt.





*On October 3, 1849 Poe fell desperately ill at Gunner's Hall, an inn at 44 East Lombard Street used as a polling place. He died at the Washington Medical College four days later. The building still stands as the Church Home and Hospital on Broadway, near Fairmont Avenue. Coincidentally, Maria Clemm died in the same hospital in 1871.*



*The present Poe monument shown above is Moses Ezekial's third version. Fire and an earthquake claimed the first two statues, one of which is shown at the left.*



In 1849, Poe began a three-month lecture tour to raise funds for a proposed magazine, but the strain led to a nervous breakdown. He traveled to Richmond, and arrived in Baltimore shortly after H. H. Clarke snapped this daguerrotype of the harbor.

This daguerreotype of Poe taken near the end of his life captures the image of the gloom-ridden soul now associated with the poet's memory. His friend Annie declared it a "caricature" and not a very good likeness.





*Leonard Calvert's ordnance, 1936. In 1824 Jesuit Joseph Carberry and his brother Thomas rescued from the St. Mary's River seven cannon presumed to have been carried to Maryland aboard the Ark and the Dove. They planted this one as a boundary marker at St. Inigoes three years later. (Maryland Historical Society.)*

# The Guns of St. Mary's

DONALD G. SHOMETTE

**J**oseph Carberry was no stranger to St. Inigoes Church. As a postulant for the Society of Jesus and as a native of St. Mary's County, Maryland, he was well aware that the little church to which he had been assigned was the oldest and perhaps most historic Catholic mission in English America. He was equally aware that the church in which he was destined to serve out his days, named for Ignatius Loyola, founder of the order, was also the most ancient Jesuit mission in the United States. As he approached the little church on a cold winter's day in 1816, he would have been able to smell the familiar brackish waters of nearby St. Inigoes Creek and the St. Mary's River, into which the creek flowed a little over three miles upriver from the confluence with the Potomac. The waters were friendly now, though little more than a year before they had served as the avenue for vicious attacks by British raiders bent on securing plunder and booty throughout the county. St. Inigoes Manor and Church and the surrounding countryside, had suffered terribly during these raids. Yet it had been in many ways little different from the agony the local inhabitants had endured during many other conflicts visited upon them over the previous 182 years.<sup>1</sup>

Father Joseph was an industrious and learned young man, full of zeal for his mission at St. Inigoes and, as events would prove, much taken with the history of the St. Mary's River region in which he had grown up. Here the founding fathers of Maryland, led by Governor Leonard Calvert, younger brother of Cecil Calvert, Lord Baltimore, had come ashore from the *Ark* and the *Dove* in 1634, bringing with them the Jesuit priest Father Andrew White and the promise of a life free of the religious conflicts that plagued their homeland. They had firmly established Baltimore's colony upon the banks of the St. Mary's after negotiating with the peaceful Yeocomaco Indians and purchasing the surrounding lands from them. In compliance with Baltimore's charter, the Europeans had erected a palisaded fort to protect their infant colony from possible attack. In 1637 a second fortification, named Fort St. Inigoes, had been constructed two and a half miles downriver from the settlement, on a strategic waterfront promontory below the mouth of St. Inigoes Creek. This fort, which was soon garrisoned by a small detachment, was erected to command the seaward approach to the village and to insure the safety of the harbor by making it secure for ships to ride free from all danger of "Hostile and Piratical Invasions."<sup>2</sup>

*The author is a maritime historian and a marine archeologist.*



*The probable site of the St. Inigoes Fort on the St. Mary's River, 1936. (Maryland Historical Society.)*

Father Joseph was undoubtedly well aware of the travails and hardships that had ensued soon after the colony's founding. He was keenly interested in the role played by the defenses of the settlement in those stormy events: the first Indian scares, the William Claiborne controversy, the "Plundering Time" of privateersman Richard Ingle, the Puritan Uprising, Fendall's Rebellion, the Susquehannock War, the Revolution of 1689, the Revolution of 1776, and, most recently, the War of 1812, or, as many bitter southern Marylanders called it, Mr. Madison's War. Each had wrought havoc and mayhem upon Father Joseph's beloved St. Mary's River country.

Arriving at St. Inigoes on February 26, 1816, Father Joseph was probably stunned by the condition in which he found the venerable old brick church, a result of both neglect and the British raids of the recent war. If so, he did not permit his dismay to linger, for within a year he had begun to restore the building. He gave it a new roof, arched the ceiling, and built a new sacristy. He re-decorated the hitherto drab interior, and he may have installed the beautiful stained glass windows that would survive him by more than a century. He added

pews and attended to a thousand and one other details that converted the dilapidated brick church into a worthy house of God. The priest's labors were unceasing. Indeed, not until 1821 or 1822 would he finally complete the restoration effort he had begun.<sup>3</sup>

Throughout the long ordeal, Father Joseph was never far from the history-steeped river he loved. He had developed a deep antiquarian interest in the few extant remnants of old St. Mary's City, Maryland's first but now all-but-forgotten capital. Though of little interest to the poor, hard-working farmers whose crops now covered the lands upon which the ancient town once stood, the remains intrigued Father Joseph. He was particularly absorbed in the mystery presented by several weathered pieces of ordnance, which lay partially encompassed by mud and earth, rusting away at the water's edge below the one-time site of Fort St. Mary's. It was said by some that the pieces were actually the same guns that had been brought to Maryland aboard the *Ark* and the *Dove*. Equally intriguing, he had learned of several more downriver, off Fort Point, in waters as deep as twenty feet. These, it was rumored, were once ensconced on the very walls of Fort St. Inigoes but had long ago eroded into the St. Mary's River along with the fort. Were these the same guns that had been carried aboard the *Ark* and the *Dove*? Were they indeed the ordnance purchased to protect the colonists on their long and dangerous voyage to America from the deadly corsairs and the hated Spanish, and from Indian attack and piratical invasion once settled in the brave new land?

Historic accounts lent credence to the story that the two vessels had been armed with or had carried great guns such as lay in and about the St. Mary's River. The earliest written record of heavy ordnance having been bound for Maryland appeared in a lawsuit leveled against Lord Baltimore himself by one of the contractors who supplied the expedition. "On May 16, 1634," it was recorded, "a certain Jones sued Baltemore for £309.14s.6d to pay him for 4 tuns of canary wine at £29 per tun, 4 sakers, a kind of small cannon weighing 99 cwt and 1 qr. at 14 shillings per cwt and 4 demiculverins, larger cannon weighing 118 cwt at the same price."<sup>4</sup>

That the *Ark* and the *Dove* carried substantial ordnance was documented by Father Andrew White himself. In his famous *Narrative* of the turbulent voyage to Maryland, the priest had produced for posterity the most detailed record, among other things, of the colonists' first landing on Maryland soil at St. Clement's Island, upon which they had briefly considered settling. While cutting wood and building a small pinnace there, Father Andrew wrote, they had encountered a body of local natives and had fired cannon from the two ships to impress and, undoubtedly, intimidate them. "Our cannon," he noted in the first mention of such guns in Maryland, "filled them with astonishment, as indeed they were not a little louder than their own twanging bows, and sounded like

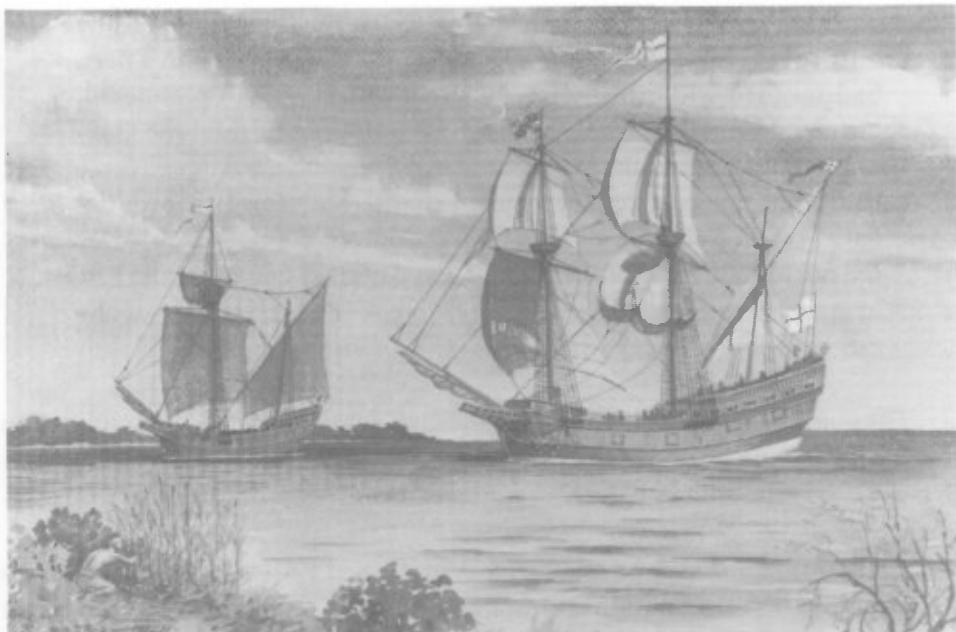
thunder." Once the colonists had surveyed the four-hundred-acre island, they quickly (and wisely) determined that it was not large enough for a settlement. The banks of a small nearby river, which they promptly dubbed St. Mary's, were found to offer "a very commodious situation for a Towne, in regard that the River affords a safe harbour for ships of any burthen, and a very bould shoare." When the *Ark* and the *Dove*, and the newly constructed pinnace built at St. Clement's, entered the river for the first time, the guns were again fired. "The Indians," stated the Jesuit's narrative, "much wondered to see such ships, and at the thundering of the Ordnance when they came to Anchor." Later, when a storehouse was built ashore, and the ships were "unladen, the Governor thought fit to bring the Colours on shore, which were attended by all the Gentlemen, and the rest of the servants in arms; who received the Colours with a volley of shot, which was answered by the Ordnance from the ships."<sup>5</sup>

The fort at St. Mary's had been erected quickly on a small bluff on the north side of a little creek, later called Keys Branch. Upon its walls, wrote Father White, they mounted "one good piece of ordnance and four murtherers [small swivel guns] and have seven pieces of ordnance more ready to mount forthwith." Another account noted that they had mounted upon the walls "some Ordnance and furnished it with some murtherers, and such other meanes of defence as they thought fit for their safeties."<sup>6</sup>

As time passed the St. Mary's fort gradually fell into disuse. The guns mounted on the works were transferred downriver to St. Inigoes Fort, a works destined to continue in use for many years. Initially, this little fort was garrisoned by barely half a dozen soldiers, a single officer, and a gunner whose duty it was to tend to the ordnance there, "making them useful and ready for service." To insure that all duties and orders regarding the new colony's trade were observed, Governor Calvert had ordered that all vessels entering and departing the river must come to anchor off the fort for a period of two tides, to be inspected. Ammunition for the works was to be supplied by a levy of a half-pound of powder, two pounds of shot, and a "considerable portion of match" for every burthen ton of a vessel trading in but not owned in the colony.<sup>7</sup>

During times of crisis, such as the Indian scare of 1642, St. Inigoes Manor, St. Inigoes Fort, and Cornwaley's Cross Manor were designated as places of refuge for the women and children of St. Michael's Hundred. The fort also served as an occasional meeting place for the colony's assembly and the provincial court. Settlers from Newtown and St. Clements Hundreds came here to pay the rents for their plantations. Within the tiny fort's walls, Maryland's first gunsmith, John Dandy, had set up shop. And here colony "chirurgeon" Henry Hooper carried on his sometimes bloody trade.<sup>8</sup>

In February 1645, at the onset of one particularly tragic episode in the settlement's history, when Royalist fought Parliamentarian, Fort St. Inigoes was



*The Ark and the Dove carried at least eight or more guns on their voyage to Maryland. Some weapons may still lie submerged in the waters of the St. Mary's River.* (Watercolor on paper by John Moll, Maryland Historical Society.)

surprised and captured without contest by the Puritan privateersman Captain Richard Ingle, commander of the letter-of-marque ship *Reformation*. St. Mary's City fell immediately afterward. Soon thereafter, the Maryland colony was subjected to a period known forever more as "The Plundering Time," as Puritans exercised their rights of conquest on the largely Catholic population. The pilaging and mistreatment of Catholics continued for several months, well after Ingle left the colony in April. In the face of this oppressive occupation by Protestant forces, many Catholics sought to maintain their faith and dignity as they always had—that is, until the big guns along the St. Mary's sounded.<sup>9</sup>

It had "been established by custom and usage of catholics who live in Maryland," noted the Jesuit chronicles,

during the whole night of the 31st of July following the festival of St. Ignatius, to honor with a salute of cannon their tutelar guardian and patron saint. Therefore, in the year, 1646, mindful of the solemn custom, the anniversary of the holy father being ended, they wished the night also consecrated to the honor of the same, by the continual discharge of artillery. At the same time, there were in the neigh-

borhood certain soldiers, unjust plunderers, Englishmen indeed by birth, of the heterodox faith, who, coming the year before with a fleet, had invaded with arms almost the entire colony had plundered, burnt, and finally, having abducted the priests and driven the Governor himself into exile, had reduced it to a miserable servitude. These had protection of a certain fortified citadel, built for their own defence, situated about five miles from the others; but now, aroused by the nocturnal report of the cannon, the day after, that is, on the first of August, rush upon us with arms, break into the houses of the catholics, and plunder whatever there is of arms and powder.<sup>10</sup>

The guns of St. Inigoes had initiated the final devastating phase of humiliation that would totally prostrate the Maryland colony. Only after a major counter-invasion was mounted by Governor Calvert late in 1646, with support from Virginia, did conditions improve.

It will probably never be known what motivated Father Joseph Carberry to undertake, of his own volition and, apparently, at his own expense, the location and recovery of the ancient guns lying scattered about the water's edge at St. Mary's and sunk off St. Inigoes. Suffice it to say that the inquisitive Jesuit was probably driven by a simple need to know and to touch the relics of the history and heritage of his forefathers and his faith, to bridge the gap of time itself. The moment was propitious. By 1824, when the priest apparently resolved to recover the guns, the grand project of church restoration was finally behind him, and he could afford to indulge, albeit briefly, his curiosity over the guns before addressing the endless duties of the calling that lay ahead. That he was equal to the project is certain. Father Joseph would soon be elevated to the post of superior and procurator of St. Inigoes Parish, a position he would retain until his death.

Father Joseph's new project, the first organized effort to recover relics from beneath the waters of a Middle Atlantic state specifically because of an interest in their historic import, is not well documented. From an archaeological standpoint, a recovery attempt such as he would administer was more in the nature of simple salvage than archaeology as we know it. Yet his undertaking differed sharply from other salvage attempts in that it was fostered by the salvor's curiosity rather than monetary or utilitarian interests in the goods being recovered.

Despite his zeal, Father Joseph knew that he could not attempt such an engineering feat on his own. Thus, he sought the aid of his brother, Captain Thomas Carberry, a former mill owner of Newtown, Maryland, who had moved to the young city of Washington prior to the late war and would eventually become its mayor. Thomas was well suited to the task. He had served as an engineer in the 36th Infantry Regiment, U.S. Army, during the war, and had been engaged



*This saker rests on the grounds of Riversdale, the estate of Charles Benedict Calvert, in Riversdale, Maryland. It is a virtual duplicate of another saker mounted on the lawn of the Maryland State House in Annapolis. (Author's photograph.)*

in actions around the Chesapeake. He had fought at St. Leonard's Creek on June 26, 1814, where, unlike other members of his unit, he had acquitted himself with honor and distinction.<sup>11</sup>

It is uncertain just what Father Joseph's intentions were once he had recovered the guns, but it seems, from subsequent events, that his first inclination was to assemble them at St. Inigoes Manor until their final disposition might be addressed. The guns at St. Mary's proved to be perhaps the easiest of the lot to tackle. Two rusting pieces of ordnance had lain exposed and forgotten on the shore under the northeast bank of the river, from which they had fallen as the shoreline gradually succumbed to erosion. A third piece lay nearby. After hoisting the guns from their resting place, undoubtedly employing some form of block and tackle, Carberry carried them up to St. Mary's Church, near the original site of the second brick colonial statehouse. A number of years after the recovery, Father Joseph related to Dr. Randolph Jones, a neighbor, how the guns were then transported to St. Inigoes Manor on August 17, 1824, by his brother Thomas. "He said he manned two bateaux, they going up to St. Mary's church, swung the cannon between the two boats and in this way conveyed them safely to St. Inigoes Manor."<sup>12</sup>

The recovery of the Fort St. Inigoes guns was undoubtedly a more difficult matter. The original fortification had been situated on the second point of land south of the mouth of St. Inigoes Creek on the east side of the St. Mary's River, a promontory known today as Fort Point (the first point being the site of St. Inigoes Manor). Here, the continual erosive onslaught of the sea had, as elsewhere on the river, made enormous inroads during the nearly two hundred years following the fort's erection. By late August or early September, when Father Joseph and his brother apparently commenced their recovery effort, the fort and its battery of ten or twelve guns and murtherers had long since been entirely swallowed by the waters of the St. Mary's. Many of the guns had been sunk in the sands before being covered by the advancing waters and now lay 150–200 yards from shore. A few, though immersed in mud and covered by oyster shells, lay in waters that were then clear and barely three or four feet deep and were relatively easy to locate and recover. Others, which lay in depths as great as twenty feet, were another matter.<sup>13</sup>

How the two Carberry's recovered the guns of Fort St. Inigoes is unknown. The shallow-water sites would, of course, have been relatively simple to deal with. With either human or animal strength and a block-and-tackle arrangement ashore or on board a shallow draft boat, the pieces could have been dragged out easily. For the deeper sites, the brothers may have employed several free-swimming divers deployed from one or more boats to snag and attach block and tackle to lift the pieces from the bottom.

The recovery effort did not go unnoticed by the press. By September 4, the popular *Niles' Weekly Register* of Baltimore was able to report that four guns had been successfully raised. Others, possibly as many as eight, said by some to have been left resting in the St. Mary's, remained where they lay. Although Father Joseph may have intended to return the following year to recover them, the duties of the Church deemed otherwise, for on June 3, 1825, he opened the register of St. Inigoes as superior and procurator of the parish and would be bound thereafter to his mission. Yet the priest and his brother must have taken great satisfaction in their accomplishment, for they had not only reached out to touch history, they had recovered it.<sup>14</sup>

But what of the guns themselves? Were they, as Father Joseph emphatically stated in 1845 to no less a personage than the Belgian minister to the United States, the same ones sent to Maryland aboard the *Ark* and the *Dove*? Their history was convoluted and obscured by time.

Several of the pieces proved to be quite utilitarian. On September 3, 1827, three years after their recovery from the river, three of the more poorly preserved guns were ceremoniously planted in the earth up to their trunnions as boundary markers between St. Inigoes Manor and Cross Manor (at that time divided into two farmsteads). The property of Father Joseph, Captain Thomas Smith, and one Peter Gough were thus marked and delineated in a most

unantiquarian fashion. Two large guns, which had been taken from the St. Mary's Church area, were planted, one in a marsh at the head of a small indent on St. Inigoes Creek called Dray Cove (now Church Creek or Molls Cove), and the second at the head of a cove on the northeast branch of a small waterway called Smith Creek. Between these two big guns, one of the smaller ones, which had been taken from the water off Fort Point, was planted at a point separating the lands of Smith and Gough. The remaining four guns are presumed to have remained ensconced at St. Inigoes Manor, as they are mentioned in a letter of March 10, 1836, written by Father Grivel, S.J., to a colleague in England.<sup>15</sup>

In 1840, Colonel William Coad, a St. Mary's County delegate to the General Assembly, well aware of the remaining guns mounted about St. Inigoes, suggested to Father Joseph that one of the four be sent to the state capital as a gift to the people and the State of Maryland. Apparently urged on in the endeavor by Governor William Grason, the priest acquiesced. In 1841, the first of the St. Mary's guns to be removed from the county in more than two hundred years was transported to Annapolis and mounted on the statehouse lawn, where it remains today, pointing defiantly seaward and once again guarding the capital of Maryland.<sup>16</sup>

A little over four years later, on November 6, 1845, Father Joseph parted with another of his guns, a virtual twin of the one sent to Annapolis. This time, the piece was presented to Charles Benedict Calvert, direct linear descendant of the first Lord Baltimore, founder of Maryland, in what appears to have been a swap—one of the ancient St. Inigoes guns for a simple carriage. The trade was apparently arranged through the auspices of the Belgian ambassador to the United States, Messr. Leruy, who had been a personal friend and house guest of the cosmopolitan superior of St. Inigoes. "I can assure you," wrote the priest in a warm letter to the ambassador,

that it gives me great pleasure to present, through you, to Mr. Calvert one of our old cannon, which was brought over by Lord Baltimore 25 March 1634. I can assure you that I hold it as a venerable relic of antiquity. And as I shall keep one of them at St. Inigoes—be pleased to say to Mr. Calvert that the carriage which he was kind enough to offer me for it will be most cordially received.<sup>17</sup>

The gun was soon delivered to Calvert's vast Riversdale estate near Bladensburg, Maryland, and eventually mounted on a bed of stone facing the nearby Anacostia River. Another of the guns had found a most fitting home. Father Joseph would not live to see the remainder of his precious relics removed from St. Inigoes, because four years after his trade with Calvert, the good priest passed on. Not until 1885, in fact, would the two remaining guns be carried from

the grounds of St. Inigoes. Their new home was to be Georgetown College, now University, where they were eventually ensconced, barrels tilted toward the sky.<sup>18</sup>

In 1934 St. Mary's County and the State of Maryland celebrated their tercentenary anniversary with all the pomp and circumstance suited for such august occasions. There was, of course, a brief and spirited renewal of antiquarian interest in the history of early Maryland and in the few surviving artifacts left behind by the founding fathers. Among those artifacts that garnered attention were the guns of St. Mary's planted as boundary markers in 1827. In honor of the anniversary, two of the pieces were recovered from their obscure burial sites and momentarily treated as celebrities. Although heavily pitted and corroded, and with one of the pieces lacking part of its muzzle, they were mounted at St. Mary's City in front of a reconstructed replica of Maryland's first statehouse, not far from where three guns had been recovered from the beach edge in 1824. Not long after the celebration had subsided, however, the St. Mary's region and its historic ordnance once more slipped into nearly two decades of obscurity. For all intents and purposes, Father Carberry's guns were again all but forgotten.<sup>19</sup>

In early 1958, Dr. Frank L. Howard, of Silver Spring, Maryland, a historian with a scholarly interest in the guns, began to track their history in earnest. He was determined to discover, among other things, just how many guns had actually been found, what type they were, and what their history had been. The redoubtable scholar may well have hoped to discover if, indeed, the guns of St. Mary's were those carried to Maryland aboard the *Ark* and the *Dove* in 1634 as Father Joseph had so ardently professed.

Howard's sleuthing was difficult, for the scarce published information regarding the guns was contradictory, and occasionally inaccurate. One authority noted that only five guns, three large and two small ones, had been recovered. Another recorded only that several guns had been brought up. But more perplexing, in a few cases their final dispositions remained an enigma. And what of the gun or guns not recovered? Did additional ordnance, as suggested by one historian, still lie nestled in the silt off Fort Point?

Howard began to locate and meticulously examine every document, paper, and publication that might lend some clue to the origins, history, and disposition of the guns. He read and reread the lawsuit of May 1634, which had mentioned the four sakers and four demiculverins, and computed their cumbersome burden aboard the two tiny ships that had carried them. He studiously examined the Jesuit chronicles of St. Inigoes and St. Mary's, and the archives of the founding fathers. He studied the land warrants and military history of St. Mary's. Piece by piece, he began to track down the seven guns that Father Joseph and his brother had recovered in 1824. A few were easy to locate, while others were more difficult. When hard data eluded Howard, he used deductive reasoning and queried expert consultants. Finally, Howard accounted for all seven guns and the greatest part of

their remarkable histories. Then he methodically measured their rusting and scaling components for comparison with the written and physical record.<sup>20</sup>

In late April 1958, needing to complete his account of the guns' measurements, Howard set out to locate the last piece, which still lay buried as a boundary marker. Though the land warrant and the records relating to the gun plantings in 1827 indicated that the piece had been partially buried at the northernmost head of Back Creek (now Smith Creek), the actual location of the last gun remained elusive, owing to a discrepancy in the early land records upon which he had deduced the location, or to a possible unrecorded resurvey of the property between 1641 and 1827. But Howard's investigative skills continued to bear fruit. Through information provided by Dr. Thomas F. Keliher of Washington, D.C., he learned that the two guns donated to the tercentenary celebration in 1934 had been recovered by a local farmer named John S. Bean. With the assistance of another local inhabitant, Frederick S. McCoy, Howard finally tracked down the elderly Bean. Howard was elated to learn that the last gun was still planted in the earth—not where it was supposed to be according to the records, but on the farmstead of Bean's brother Lloyd. A visit to Lloyd Bean's farm revealed the last gun. The piece had not been planted at the head of Back Creek as the land warrants stated, but in an obscure little cove to the south of it.

Howard began to analyze all of the ordnance, piece by piece, in an effort to compare each with other guns and historical data that might provide conclusive identification and the date of their manufacture. His analysis was difficult, as he had little knowledge of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century ordnance. Yet the information he compiled was substantial. His research would stand for more than a decade as the basic body of information on the guns of early Maryland.

The problems of assessing the guns were considerable. The Bean gun remained protruding from the earth with only two and a half feet of the muzzle end exposed, limiting Howard's ability to evaluate the piece. All of the remaining guns were more or less corroded. Moldings were no longer sharp, and outlines had blurred. Precise dimensions of the pieces had changed through loss of metal surface area by oxidation. The two guns at Georgetown were so badly deteriorated that the exact position of their touch holes could not be ascertained. The cascabels of all of the guns appeared to have been broken off or corroded to such an extent that data assemblage there was impossible. Hence, only where corrosion was obviously small did he attempt to take measurements as close as an inch. The muzzle of one of the guns at St. Mary's was broken off, and its breech was severely deteriorated. Both of the St. Mary's guns that had been recovered from the earth in 1934 were, in fact, in terrible shape. Other than a coat of paint or a layer of tar, no efforts had been undertaken to stabilize the rate of decay or to deter the ongoing oxidation that was gradually reducing the pair to piles of rusty scales.

Owing to these limitations, Howard made no attempt to ascertain whether

the guns were chambered, that is, whether the bore diameter, which determined the caliber of shot, decreased at the breech end. Most of the guns had accumulated an enormous amount of rust and other debris in their bores, and gathering data about that portion of the gun was impossible. The ultimate indignity, however, was that the guns at Georgetown, tilted heavenward and guarding the entrance to the Healy Building, had become trash receptacles. Howard was nevertheless undeterred.

Guns of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were classed by name to designate type and size. Howard knew that Lord Baltimore had sent at least two types of guns, referred to as sakers and demiculverins, to Maryland. It was unclear, however, whether they were intended as naval artillery mounted specifically for ship defense or carried as cargo ultimately destined for the protection of the colony. Were they the same guns that had fired those historic shots at St. Clements Island and the salutes on the St. Mary's River, or were they the eight guns mounted on the walls of St. Mary's Fort or the ones that had set off the final days of the "plundering time"? Were the guns recovered from the river the same ones brought to Maryland in 1634, as Father Carberry proclaimed? Identification of the pieces was not simply a matter of looking them up in a book. Gun production in the sixteenth through the early eighteenth centuries had few standards. Dimensions in a single class varied enormously. Howard astutely observed that gun founding was an art rather than a science, and each founder had individual patterns, which were changed from time to time to take advantage of experiments showing the way to superior designs or to satisfy the founder's whims.

Guns were classified according to size and mission, but these varied from founder to founder and among nations. English guns were, on occasion, subclassified to more precisely reflect their size and strength. For example, there were three types of culverins: double-fortified, legitimate, and demiculverins. Those of an odd size were designated bastard culverins. Larger families of guns were classified as cannons, cannon royals, petreros, and bombards. During the sixteenth century there were also basilisks, demicannons, bastard cannons, and cannon serpentines. Gun families smaller than culverins included sakers, demisakers, minions, falcons, falconets, and rabinets. Small antipersonnel guns were referred to as murderers. Compounding the confusion was the fact that many sizes and classes of guns occasionally overlapped.<sup>21</sup>

Guns of the sixteenth through the eighteenth centuries were basically divided into three lengthwise sections separated from each other by bands, or rings, cast on the outer surface. The rings were nonfunctional decorative additions to the ordnance, evolutionary holdovers from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, when guns were manufactured from strips of wrought iron bound together by iron bands. These rings conveniently subdivided the gun into the following sections: the first reinforce, the section on the breech end; the second reinforce, or



*The guns deteriorated and corroded after long immersion in the St. Mary's River. (Author's photograph.)*

middle; and the chase, or forward end, which included the muzzle. Some guns were chambered near the breech end by increasing the wall thickness in an effort to furnish additional strength around the powder charge. Two common chambered forms were simple chambered and bell chambered, the former being smooth-sided all the way to the breech end, and the second reducing the size abruptly by increasing the thickness approximately three quarters of the distance behind the muzzle.<sup>22</sup>

The vent, or touch hole, was a small aperture near the end of the bore in the breech area. By filling the touch hole with powder and applying either a slow-burning wick called a match, a flame, or a hot iron to the primer, the cannoneer ignited the powder charge in the cannon. The large end of the piece behind the touch hole was termed the breech. To this was often attached a handle, usually a ball-shaped feature, and decorative moldings. This area was referred to as the cascabel. Immediately in front of the vent was a decorative ring called an astragal.<sup>23</sup>

At the opposite end of the gun was the muzzle, which included the barrel as far back as the first ring, or chase astragal. At the business end of the muzzle, various decorative rings were molded, providing a bulge known as the bell. Near the middle of the gun were attached the trunnions, two cylindrical protuberances on either

side of the piece for mounting it in its carriage, and which acted as bearings for its elevation. Until the middle of the eighteenth century, the trunnions had been mounted below the center line of the bore. Such trunnions, produced prior to 1756, when they were raised to the center line, were referred to as "old style."<sup>24</sup>

Howard examined the gun then mounted on the back portico of the reconstructed statehouse at St. Mary's City and proclaimed it to be a falcon, a diminutive weapon occasionally employed as armament for small ships. After 107 years of burial in the earth up to its trunnions the piece was fairly well preserved on its back end, but the exposed area, which had not been buried, was rapidly succumbing to oxidation, with scales of rust sloughing off at the slightest touch. With a bore of two and a half inches, he estimated the piece had fired a two-pound shot. Compensating for its degeneration, he calculated its original length to have been approximately six feet, and its weight at between six hundred and eight hundred pounds. A unique feature was the location of the vent at the forward end of the powder charge. "It is quite probable," he concluded, "that it was armament on the Ark and may have been one of the guns used to impress the Indians."<sup>25</sup>

The second gun at St. Mary's, which had also been buried at St. Inigoes Manor, was in a far more deteriorated state, with its muzzle end incomplete. Though measurements were taken, Howard did not attempt to address its vita. The guns at Riversdale and Annapolis, it was discovered, were almost identical. Although Howard early on determined that they were sakers, principally based upon their bore size of four inches (allowing for a half-inch of lost surface area from corrosion), he was careful to note that they were longer and heavier than the more commonly known English sakers. Unlike most guns of this type, which varied from seven to eight feet in length, both the Riversdale and Annapolis guns approached ten feet. In the ratios of their extremely well fortified wall thicknesses at the vent, trunnions, and chase, they in fact resembled Spanish passovolantes. Sakers, Howard observed, generally weighed between 1,500 and 1,700 pounds. From the dimensions of the Riversdale and Annapolis guns, he calculated their weight at approximately 2,050 pounds each. How, then, he asked himself, could these be the same as those noted in the Jones bill against Lord Baltimore, which designated their weight at 99 hundredweight, or nearly 2,480 pounds each? Researching seventeenth-century works pertaining to guns and gun foundries, he discovered a possible answer. In 1646, twelve years after the settlement at St. Mary's had been established, one William Eldrid published a treatise entitled "The Gunner's Glasse" in which he addressed the advantages of iron guns over the more popular and expensive brass guns of the period. Commenting on sakers, he stated: "These Brass Sakers [of 1625] weighed between 1600 and 1700 [pounds] and your Ordnance of the same height of bore do now in times of 50 founding weight about 2500."<sup>26</sup>

Howard rationalized the increased length by noting that a famous saker known as the "ringtail saker" of gunfounder Hans Poppenruyter, which was cast in Spain in 1566, was ten times as long as the diameter of the breech (length-to-breech ratio being one of the principal diagnostic tools for identification), and hence proportionately much longer than either the Riversdale or Annapolis pieces, whose ratio was 7.6 to 1. As for the considerable wall thicknesses of the Riversdale and Annapolis guns, Howard suggested that the founder had used an outside mold intended for a culverin class of gun, together with a bore mold much smaller than usual, producing an exceptionally strong piece. If so, he proposed, it was a design innovation destined to be forgotten, for it remained undocumented.<sup>27</sup>

The two Georgetown guns were in despicable shape, their rusting chambers filled with rainwater, cigarette butts, and trash. A large crack, the result of accumulated water freezing inside, had developed in one of the pieces. Howard found that these two guns, aside from being slightly longer, were similar to the great gun mounted at St. Mary's. Analyzing the bore size and computing the caliber of the pieces, he determined them to be nominal four-inch demiculverins or bastard culverins originally about nine feet long with a bore length of twenty-three or twenty-four calibers, which fired a nine-pound shot. An analysis of the exposed portion of the Bean gun indicated that it was probably also of the same class.<sup>28</sup>

Howard was not content with having tentatively identified the guns from the St. Mary's. Having whetted his appetite, he now intended to locate the remainder of those that he believed Father Joseph had overlooked and which remained in the river at the site of eroded Fort St. Inigoes. In mid-July and again in September 1958, he set off with a friend and diver, Charles R. Yokely, to search the river for signs of the old fort and its long lost guns. Unlike his predecessor, however, Howard was not blessed with good fortune, and his efforts ended in failure. Yet, his contribution to an expanded view of the history, typology, and origins of the guns was not in vain. The Bean gun was soon afterward recovered by the St. Mary's County Historical Society and mounted on a brick platform in front of the society headquarters at Leonardtown, the county seat.<sup>29</sup>

In 1966 the Maryland General Assembly authorized the formation of the St. Mary's City Commission (SMCC) to "preserve, develop, and maintain . . . historic St. Mary's City and environs." Three years later, the site of the venerable capital was designated a National Historic Landmark. The foundations for one of the most significant long-term historic archaeological programs in the state's history had been laid, and with it emerged a renewed interest in the guns of the St. Mary's.<sup>30</sup>

By 1970 the painstaking research into the cultural and material history of the settlement had begun, and an archaeological program of singular import to the history of early Maryland was well under way. The commission, under the chairmanship of General Robert E. Hogaboom, USMC (Ret.), soon developed a keen



*One of Lord Baltimore's cannon is on permanent display at the St. Mary's County Historical Society in Leonardtown, Maryland. (Author's photograph.)*

interest in reassembling the guns at St. Mary's. Preliminary efforts were made to request that those agencies and other institutions that had possession of the ordnance return them to their rightful home, but with little success.<sup>31</sup>

In mid-1971, Garry Wheeler Stone, director of archaeology for the SMCC, commissioned Harold L. Peterson, an expert in the field of historic ordnance, to evaluate the two guns at St. Mary's. Peterson greatly expanded upon Howard's pioneering work by conducting a search for comparable guns in such collections as the Royal Artillery Institution at Woolwich, England, the Tower of London, the Musee de l'Armee in Paris, and the Tajhusmuseet in Copenhagen. He reviewed data on ordnance recovered from identifiable shipwrecks and corresponded with students of early artillery in the United States and abroad. Peterson was able to compare one of the intact St. Mary's gun's highly domed breech and almost cylindrical cascabel, which was typical of those of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century, to two English pieces at Woolwich; a minion and saker of the period at Plymouth, Massachusetts; two guns cast in 1601 and 1638 in

the Tower of London collection; and contemporary Italian works on artillery. Though there was some contradiction relating to the subtlety of the moldings in the reinforces and the sophistication of the muzzle swell (features hitherto associated with the eighteenth century), he was able through assiduous research to offer a reasonable answer. "The problem," he noted, "... was to see if a specimen of a cannon definitely datable from the early years of the 17th century and combining the 'early' and 'late' features of the St. Mary's City guns could be found. If not, one faced the problem of deciding if the years of corrosion could have altered the cascabel and molding patterns sufficiently to decide which was the more altered."<sup>32</sup> Fortunately, a search of existing specimens provided "unassailable evidence" that the combination of features existed in 1634. By comparison of data with a gun in the Tower of London and with a falcon recovered from a Bermuda shipwreck of the period 1595–1600, Peterson proved that the larger gun could easily have been produced prior to the founding of the St. Mary's settlement. But it was the gun from the shipwreck site that provided the conclusive data. "On this piece," he wrote, "the breech face, cascabel form, reinforces and muzzle shape seems almost identical to those originally on the St. Mary's gun as nearly as one can tell after allowances for corrosion and loss are taken into account."<sup>33</sup>

Peterson proceeded to reevaluate the specimen by size designation. He found it to be somewhat larger in bore and shorter in length than the usual dimensions of either English or French demiculverins of the time. The bore diameter of 4.75 inches, allowing an inch for windage, was the exact size of the specimen. When he measured the bore with seventeenth-century gunner's calipers, "it read 'demi-culverin' almost exactly." He attributed the 107-inch length, which was short for listed demiculverins of the period by between ten and thirteen inches, to be a consequence of the inconsistent sizes of the era. Though Howard failed to address the smaller, broken gun, Peterson had soon determined its type and period of origin. Most of the characteristics, he discovered, dated no later than the late seventeenth century, possibly as late as 1700 or a few years after. The three-inch bore was exactly that of the classic saker described in all of the English ordnance manuals. This piece was also checked with seventeenth-century English gunner's calipers and read "saker" exactly. On October 14, 1971, Peterson submitted his final report and conclusions regarding the two guns. "It is the conclusion of this study," he wrote, "... that one of the St. Mary's City cannon is a demi-culverin of a type that could have come to the colony with the first shipment of cannon. The other, of necessity, must have arrived later."<sup>34</sup>

In November 1980, 156 years after the Carberry brothers raised the last of the guns to be recovered from the St. Mary's River, the third and last study of the guns was completed by Herbert Robinson, chief of interpretation for the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission of Prince George's County.

Robinson focused solely on the Riversdale gun. At the conclusion of his report, he, too, confirmed that the piece was possibly an artifact of the founding fathers: "I feel it safe to refer to this relic gun as one of the guns that came over on the *Ark and Dove*."<sup>35</sup>

Father Joseph would have been delighted.

#### NOTES

1. See Edwin W. Beitzell, *The Jesuit Missions of St. Mary's County, Maryland* (Abell, Md.: privately printed, 1960), 162–68, for a complete account of the pillage of St. Inigoes by the British in the War of 1812.
2. Clayton C. Hall, ed., *Narratives of Early Maryland, 1633–1634* (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1910), 106; William Hand Browne, ed., *Archives of Maryland*, 72 vols. to date (Baltimore: Maryland Historical Society, 1883– ), 1:292–93.
3. Beitzell, *Jesuit Missions*, 169.
4. Bernard C. Steiner, "New Light on Maryland History from the British Archives," *Maryland Historical Magazine*, 4 (1909): 251.
5. E. A. Dalrymple, ed. *Narrative of a Voyage to Maryland*, Maryland Historical Society Fund-Publication no. 7 (Baltimore: John Murphy & Co. for the Maryland Historical Society, 1874), 32, 35, 74, 75; Raphael Semmes, *Captains and Mariners of Early Maryland* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1937), 313.
6. An additional piece of ordnance and six "murtherers" were supposedly positioned elsewhere about the town's defense palisade in convenient places, but this is probably a variation of the first report (*Archives of Maryland*, 8:267, 277). Henry Miller, Director of Archaeology at St. Mary's City, notes that the site mentioned here is the commonly accepted position of the fort, "but we suspect it may be further to the east of this location" (Henry Miller, personal communication).
7. *Archives of Maryland*, 1: 292–93, 3:177.
8. Ibid. 3: 107–8, 178, 179; 1:209; 4:310, 322; 10:95; 41:421; Semmes, *Captains and Mariners*, 240, 293.
9. Beitzell, *Jesuit Missions*, 15, 20.
10. Dalrymple, *Narrative of a Voyage to Maryland*, 94–95. The identity of the "certain fortified citadel" mentioned in the Jesuit chronicles is uncertain. Henry Miller hypothesized that "the distances are not correct, but this could refer to Pope's Fort which we discovered in 1982. It surrounded Leonard Calvert's original house, later called the Country House. I suspect [Richard] Ingle's men helped build it in the spring of 1645." (Henry M. Miller, personal communication.)
11. Regina Combs Hammett, *History of St. Mary's County, Maryland* (Ridge, Md.: privately printed, 1977), 86; Donald G. Shomette, *Flotilla: Battle for the Patuxent* (Solomons, Md.: Calvert Marine Museum Press, 1981), 86, 100.
12. *The Georgetown College Journal*, 12 (May 1884), quoted from a letter to the *Baltimore Sun* from a woman who lived near St. Inigoes. Frank L. Howard, "The Guns of St. Mary's," *Chronicles of St. Mary's*, 6 (September 1958): 97. The letter has not been found, although a search of the series from November 1883 to June 1884 was made. The date of the recovery and its being carried out by Thomas Carberry is attested to in an attachment of a letter from Father Joseph to Messr. Leruy, Belgian minister to the United States, on November 6, 1845 in

box 100 1/2, Jesuit Archives, Woodstock, Maryland, in the Georgetown University Library. The first official statehouse in Maryland was the Country House of Leonard Calvert.

13. J. Edwin Coad, of Drayden, Maryland, letter in the *Baltimore Sun*, 1906 (clipping in St. Inigoes Manor Record Book); Dalrymple, *Narrative of a Voyage to Maryland*, 107, provides the positional data but lumps the guns from St. Inigoes with those recovered from St. Mary's, claiming all seven came from the Fort Point site of the river. See Howard, "Guns of St. Mary's," for a complete accounting. Henry M. Miller (in a personal communication) questioned whether the guns might not have been intentionally thrown into the river: "This seems too deep and far out from the current shore for erosion to account for this." Modern measurements indicate that the erosion rate in the Fort Point area is slight to moderate, that is, an annual loss of two to four feet. This could easily explain why the fort site might lie well off the modern shoreline after more than three hundred years. See Larry G. Ward, Peter S. Rosen, William J. Neal, Orrin H. Pilkey, Jr., Orrin H. Pilkey, Sr., Gary Anderson, and Stephen J. Howie, *Living with the Chesapeake Bay and Virginia's Ocean Shores* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1989), 131.

14. *Niles' Weekly Register*, September 4, 1824. Dalrymple noted that a total of ten to twelve guns had been mounted on the walls of Fort St. Inigoes but failed to cite his source.

15. Undated and unsigned letter attached to the letter from Joseph Carberry to Calvert, November 6, 1845. The guns were planted in the presence of Joseph Callaghan, Joseph Carberry, Dr. Jones, Thomas Smith, Peter Gough, Ignatius Langley, and Father Tarleton. See Howard, "Guns of St. Mary's," 92, 93. *The Woodstock Letters* (Baltimore: privately printed and circulated by the Society of Jesus, Maryland Province), vol. 10, no. 3.

16. Hammett, *History of St. Mary's County*, 169; Howard, "Guns of St. Mary's," 94; Joseph Carberry to Leruy, November 6, 1845, Georgetown University Library.

17. Carberry to Leruy, November 6, 1845, op cit.

18. Howard, "Guns of St. Mary's," 94. Not having access to the Carberry letters, Howard incorrectly hypothesized that the Riversdale gun was taken away from St. Inigoes either prior to 1827 or about 1840 (*ibid.*, 86, 93).

19. *Ibid.*, 93.

20. *Ibid.*, 86–96.

21. Albert Manucy, *Artillery Through the Ages* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1949), 28, 35; Howard, "Guns of St. Mary's," 87. The word culverin is derived from the Latin word colubra, meaning snake (Manucy, 35).

22. Manucy, *Artillery Through the Ages*, 39; Howard, "Guns of St. Mary's," 87.

23. Mauncy, 39. See also John Miller, *A Treatise of Artillery* (London: printed for John Millan, 1780), for a description of ordnance design and construction after 1756.

24. Howard, "Guns of St. Mary's," 88.

25. *Ibid.*, 92.

26. See William Eldrid, "The Gunner's Glasse" (1646), in Charles Ffoulkes, *The Gun-Founders of England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1937), and Howard, "Guns of St. Mary's," 88.

27. Howard, "Guns of St. Mary's," 88, 89. Manucy notes that sixteenth-century sakers varied even more, weighing 1,400 pounds, measuring six feet, eleven inches long, and firing ninety-six-pound shot. (*Artillery Through the Ages*, 35.)

28. Howard, "Guns of St. Mary's," 89.

29. Editor's note, in Howard, "Guns of St. Mary's," 94. Howard's hopes of locating the remaining St. Inigoes guns were not abandoned. In June 1969, Melvin Jackson of the

Smithsonian Institution, the St. Mary's City Commission, and St. Mary's College fitted out a one-day underwater expedition to evaluate the nature of the river bottom, discover the location of historic ship anchorages, and locate early wharves and piers that served the St. Mary's settlement. Although no effort was undertaken to locate the St. Inigoes site or the remaining guns, Jackson proposed conducting a magnetometer survey in the area the following year off Priest's Point, which he confused with Fort Point. Nothing was done. In 1971 the chairman of the St. Mary's City Commission contacted someone at the Milwaukee Public Museum for assistance, but the individual turned out to be a sport diver with no archaeological experience. The quest for the guns was finally given up. Melvin Jackson, "Report on St. Mary's City Underwater Exploration," and Henry M. Miller to Donald Shomette, February 23, 1989, both documents are in the possession of the author.

30. *St. Mary's City: A Plan for the Preservation and Development of Maryland's First Capital* (St. Mary's City Commission, March 1970), iv–v.
31. Robert E. Hogaboom to Ann M. Ferguson, December 21, 1970, photocopy, in the possession of the author.
32. Harold L. Peterson to Garry Wheeler Stone, October 14, 1971, photocopy in the author's possession; Harold L. Peterson, "The Cannon of St. Mary's City," Report to the St. Mary's City Commission, October 14, 1971, p. 3. A photocopy is in the possession of the author.
33. Peterson, "The Cannon of St. Mary's City," 3.
34. *Ibid.*, 5.
35. Herb Robinson to John Walton, April 10, 1979 and November 5, 1980, Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission, Riverdale; Herb Robinson, "Report on the Calvert 'Cannon,'" Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, Riverdale, Maryland, November 5, 1980, 6–7.

ginning in Virginia in the early 1600s and moving on to Maryland in the mid-1600s. One of the strongest points of the book is the explanation of how local ecology strongly affected English settlement and subsequent pressures on the Indians to conform to English ways or to leave. Eastern Shore Maryland was settled much later because the fur trade lasted longer, and traders both exploited and protected Indians to further their business. In addition, the more populous Nanticoke were able to play off, to some extent, the English and the Iroquois to the north, causing Maryland authorities to give stronger recognition to Indian sovereignty in their territory.

More discussion of culture and culture process would be welcome. One wishes Rountree had taken some inferential leaps to give a fuller range of possibilities to the later history. She rather cautiously posits the choice for the few Indians who remained after the 1740s as one between "Anglicization" and remaining "traditional" people. It seems the Indians could also adapt features of English culture while retaining many of their own beliefs without disappearing as Indian groups—in other words, most likely becoming hidden Indian communities. Or, when the pressure to become either free black or white was extreme, the Indians could acculturate toward the free black model and retain some Indian identity as well.

A brief review cannot do justice to this complex book. It is not an easy read for the non-specialist, but is extremely worthwhile. Its analysis of what is known about Eastern Shore tribes and the questions it raises are important. It should serve as a stimulus for further research and, one hopes, substantial archeological study of the Indian sites of the Eastern Shore. Our knowledge of ethnohistory is such that we can make educated guesses (or ethnohistorical inferences) which can lead to new sources and additional knowledge. *Eastern Shore Indians* opens a door for those who may want to deepen research in this challenging and exciting area.

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*Gardens and Gardening in the Chesapeake, 1700-1805.* By Barbara Wells Sarudy. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998. 220 pages. Appendix, notes, index. \$29.95.)

We have been told the lure of gardens increases in proportion to the hectic pace of modern life, that manipulating the landscape gives us a sense of controlling some part of our everyday stressful environment. Plant nurseries and the gardening sections of our favorite bookstores are prospering. But, in *Gardens and Gardening in the Chesapeake, 1700-1805*, we discover this current passion for gardening to be a reflection, if not a continuation, of the past. Using a remarkable variety of primary source material, Barbara Wells Sarudy investi-

## Book Reviews

*Eastern Shore Indians of Virginia and Maryland.* By Helen C. Rountree and Thomas E. Davidson. (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1997. 344 pages. Illustrations, tables, maps, appendices, notes, index. \$49.50 cloth, \$16.95 paper.)

Helen Rountree and Thomas Davidson have taken on a daunting task in *Eastern Shore Indians*. Both authors are well qualified for the task, having written many books and articles on Indians of the Western Shore of the Chesapeake, and in Davidson's case, articles on Eastern Shore archaeology and ethnohistory. Except for the Gingaskin Indians in Virginia near the tip of what we call the Delmarva Peninsula, and the Nanticoke of Delaware, all of the tribes of the Eastern Shore had either removed themselves or became submerged in the local population by the late eighteenth century. Rountree and Davidson do not discuss the Nanticoke after a 1760s boundary survey placed their tribe in Delaware, a history well documented by the late C. W. Weslager.

The English, unlike French missionaries and traders in North America, did not leave an extensive description of the Indian tribes with whom they dealt. In fact, they ignored Indian cultures almost completely. English notions of cultural superiority led to devaluations of Indian folkways, intense interest in occupation of their land, and efforts to dominate, rather than to understand their native neighbors. Accordingly, the documentation of Eastern Shore Indians is extremely slender, and nearly all of it is filtered through the eyes of the dominant white society.

The strength of Rountree and Davidson's book is that they combine a great variety of hard-to-find county court and provincial items concerning Indians with an extensive discussion of the geography and ecology of the Eastern Shore area to give the first book-length description of the local Indian population up to the early 1800s. One of the finest aspects of the book is a series of fourteen superb maps drafted by Rountree showing ecological zones as well as former reservations. The discussion of subsistence activities is buttressed by two lengthy appendices listing edible and medicinal wild plants and fish and shellfish. By grounding their discussion in food gathering, horticulture, geography, and the few known cultural features of the tribes, the authors are able to give a much fuller and far more interesting depiction of Indian life than the scarce documentation would allow.

Rountree and Davidson interweave the history of the intrusion of the English population into the Eastern Shore with the daily round of Indian life, be-

gates the where, how, who, what, and why of early Chesapeake gardens. Through countless archival references, in often irreverent, personal commentary, Sarudy paints evocative portraits of real persons. William Faris, to whom Sarudy devotes an entire chapter, is engagingly depicted as “a tired 75-year-old clockmaker, with thinning hair . . . who gossiped too much and drank gin too freely” outside his garden gate. “But on the other side of the bright gate, the old man blossomed.” Faris, we find, was obsessed with tulips, growing as many as 2,339 in the spring of 1804. A crafty businessman, Faris was also showing off his tulips at the height of their bloom and then marking a potential client’s favorites and selling them the bulbs once the plants died back in June.

Sarudy’s text is intended “for a diversity of readers” (xii), an expansion of research originally published in the *Journal of Garden History*. She wrote the book because “it was at least as important to study the grounds they designed immediately around their homes” (viii), and Sarudy has selected a particular time and place for her study in the eighteenth-century Chesapeake region. Beginning with “Places,” Sarudy introduces us in great detail to a rarely glimpsed middle-class garden, comparing and contrasting it with the many gardens of regional gentry.

This thesis of place is summed up in the chapter entitled “The Republican Garden,” wherein “ornament and utility are happily united” (50). Sarudy contends the recognizable penchant for traditional aesthetics in Chesapeake gardens, along with a practical inclusion of vegetables and privet hedges, is a well-documented tradition. Many of the eighteenth-century gardeners’ concerns, including soil erosion, variety and availability of foodstuffs, and access through recognizable gateways or avenues, were similar to ours today, even to the potential destructiveness of large deer populations. This section works especially well with the book’s unusual form of illustrations. The opportunity to study individual gardens in the Baltimore city area as delineated by Charles Varle in 1797 and published by Warner and Hanna as a *Plan of the City and Environs of Baltimore* in 1799 and 1801, permits visualization of manuscript descriptions. Avenues of trees, garden beds, and falling terraces, and even bits of architecture may be discerned. The Varle illustrations are complemented by other plans and drawings provided by the author, reflecting her theme of ornament and utility united. The illustrations aesthetically and practically provide information essential to a better understanding of place in eighteenth-century Maryland. There are also almost two-dozen color plates to illuminate the author’s theses.

Social and economic ramifications are addressed in greater detail in a section entitled “Means,” where we discover “Gardening for pleasure was no longer just the province of a few wealthy planters but increasingly an avocation of the expanding class of artisans and merchants, who were amassing capital that they could exchange for ornamental luxuries that would proclaim their status to their

neighbors" (77). The complexity and diversity of available seeds, plants, and garden books are documented in detail. Public and private libraries produced informed designs, based on Palladian and Roman precedents. The laborers who made these gardens possible occupy a powerful chapter. Sarudy exposes the commercial reality of this slave-holding region, relating that renting out of slaves and servants with special expertise was common (often noted in Ridgely accounts). Most experienced gardeners were indentured servants from Britain before the Revolution, often combining another trade such as dyeing, weaving, or shoemaking during winter months. Some were convicts, their lives interwoven with the slaves, indentured servants, and poor freemen. Sarudy documents the chilling fate of most garden laborers who suffered health problems from constant exposure, whippings, or wearing a double riveted steel collar as identification or punishment.

Echoing modern commercial gardening ventures, Sarudy records a widespread importation of exotic plants and seeds, as well as "elegant artificial flowers and feathers suitable for the Ladies" (66). The earliest of the traveling seedsmen in the Chesapeake region, Peter Bellet, called himself a florist and advertised his flowers as "rare and curious." He also grafted and inoculated trees and designed entire gardens. Eventually, Bellet settled in Williamsburg, Virginia, growing over 100,000 fruit trees. His exploits and those of other early nurserymen are entertainingly described. William Booth provided the ladies of Baltimore with ornamental potted plants for the interiors of their homes, while allowing them to return them "for care over the winter (for a slight fee), and receive them the following spring in 'full perfection'" (73). Gatherings of gardening enthusiasts are also described, foreshadowing the development of the Maryland Agricultural Society and other social and scientific groups where ideas as well as specimens could be exchanged.

"Why?" The question that intrigues us from childhood is one that Sarudy investigates through the psychological motivations of garden ornamentation and utility in a section described as "Motives." Pleasure, food, and society are separately addressed, with complementary illustrations from two cleverly selected source books. Dover reprints of *Old English Cuts and Illustrations*, and *1800 Woodcuts by Thomas Bewick and His School*, delineate human inhabitants, who appear to be enjoying life's pleasures, occupations, and sustenance as lived through a garden. Ironically, however, even the laborers are portrayed as happy in these illustrations.

Chapter 8, "Food," details a greater contemporary interest in fruits, vegetables, herbs, and nuts than is often discussed in current historic site interpretation. Our good fortune, a wide variety of produce at all seasons, was unknown, with retention of one bushel of apples for winter consumption requiring at least ten bushels eventually culled down to one. Most people grew their own herbs,

for both culinary and medicinal purposes. Many varieties of grapes, for eating fresh, drinking as juice, drying for raisins, as well as producing "Country Wine," presaged the successful Chesapeake wine industry.

Sarudy's chapters on society, inspiration, and expression enlarge our perspective. Asserting in her preface that "Human intellect, intuition, nurture, and spirit meld together in a garden" (vii), the author elaborates here on the garden as a place for people to gather "to work, to walk, to think, to talk, to play, to love, and to celebrate" (103). Chesapeake gardeners showed off their successes, "so that all would acknowledge his 'delicate and Just Taste,' which were the result of his great 'Invention & Industry, & Expense'" (110). At Hampton, an oversized octagonal cupola atop his three-story Georgian "palace in the wilderness" allowed Charles Ridgely to display the amazing scope of his terraced "falls" to the south, and the carefully contrived landscape park, access road, and home farm, to the north. Foreign visitors were taken on extensive tours of property and recorded glowing descriptions.

One wishes Sarudy had included even more fascinating tidbits of information; that, for example, Ridgely papers had been more thoroughly examined for additional discussion of one of the best-documented gardens in America. However, it is already difficult to distinguish some of the sectional divisions, with much of the intriguing information melding from chapter to chapter. And, of some concern are discernable editing errors. I was surprised by an incorrect birth date for Charles Ridgely of Hampton, later referred to mistakenly as Colonel Ridgely instead of Captain Ridgely. Both of these errors would have been easy to catch by reviewing the reference source (the endnote for which also contains two editing errors). An assertion in a plate caption that the only documented part of the Paca garden is the section painted by Charles Willson Peale is somewhat misleading, although the author does relate the importance of archaeology to this restoration in text found elsewhere in the book. Despite these errors, it is essential to make use of Sarudy's endnotes. Some of the most fascinating nuggets of information reside here, including intriguing references to cold spring baths (180).

But these are essentially minor caveats. The appendix tables play to a diverse audience, including plants grown and produce purchased by William Faris, the craftsman. This information reflects contemporary taste as well as cost of living and most of the varieties of fruits, vegetables, herbs, and flowers listed still are mainstays in today's gardens and groceries. Readers less familiar with Chesapeake gardens will relish the book's short postscript, describing regional gardens with historic integrity that still may be experienced. In light of recent scholarship, the main body of archival research will fertilize a growing field, to develop a definitive understanding of a neglected area of historical research. Those of us charged with preserving and interpreting the past are indebted to Sarudy

for providing a body of primary data that expands our understanding of gardens as planned personal and cultural environments. Sarudy's book is a valuable addition to garden scholarship, an important reference for landscape historians and gardening enthusiasts alike.

LYNNE DAKIN HASTINGS  
*Hampton National Historic Site*

*From Calabar to Carter's Grove: The History of a Virginia Slave Community.* By Lorena S. Walsh. (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1997. 335 pages. Appendices, notes, bibliography, index. \$34.95.)

This book grew out of a long collaboration, nurtured assiduously by Lorena Walsh, between archaeologists, preservationists, and historians trying to reconstruct slavery at Carter's Grove, Virginia. While Walsh laments the dearth of sources that might illuminate the thoughts and social lives of slaves, she nevertheless ingeniously weaves existing documentary, material, and archaeological evidence into a "multigenerational group history" (6). Walsh has squeezed remnants of demographic information in order to find links among generations of Burwell family slaves at and around Carter's Grove. She has also applied the growing secondary literature on Virginia slavery to tantalizing shards of material evidence and tidbits of social memory. It is Walsh's explicit intention to avoid the pitfalls of most scholarship, which offers either "general and impersonal" accounts based on data or portraits of individuals that are "rare and probably atypical" (226). The collective experience, rather than that of individuals, is at the heart of her narrative.

Although the present reconstructed site at Carter's Grove is frozen at about 1770, Walsh traces generations of the Burwell slaves from the West Coast of Africa to Virginia, from the first small plantations to the creation of dense neighborhoods, to the American Revolution, and (somewhat more sketchily) into westerly migration. There are two branches of Carter's Grove slaves. One, dating from earliest times, came from diverse West African origins and settled first on estates in nearby York and Gloucester Counties. They became creolized by the early 1700s (a creole is a black slave born in America as opposed to one brought from Africa). A second, more homogenous, branch came from Calabar in the 1720s and 1730s to King Carter's plantation. When Carter Burwell inherited Carter's Grove in 1737, the two branches—creoles and recently arrived Africans—shared living quarters and work routines. By the time of Revolution, very few African-born slaves remained at Carter's Grove.

Walsh admits that drawing the bold contours of the creolization process during Carter Burwell's tenure on the plantation, not to mention filling in the finer details of material and cultural life, resists even the most meticulous ef-

forts. But certain important findings emerge, some of which bolster other scholarship, and some of which provide new insights into Virginia slaves and planters. Among the familiar findings: Carter's Grove and other Burwell farms retained a relatively small number of slaves, as did many other Tidewater locations. Demographic patterns show that, as happened elsewhere, the early years were rough before reproduction stabilized in the mid-1700s. In addition, Walsh presents a familiar portrait of indentured servants and slaves who worked together before the labor pattern gave way to racial separation.

Historians following the prickly debate about when, how, and to what extent African slaves became creolized will also notice that although Walsh is able to refine the histories of some Burwell slaves, she generally agrees with studies positing rapid creolization of slaves imported through the early 1700s, a process that continued as new Africans entered the colony. Together with the best studies, Walsh insists that creolization was never a smooth process. Some of her best analysis of Carter's Grove slaves balances evidence about the raw power of masters over slaves with evidence of slaves' cultural autonomy. Walsh peppers her story with reflections on emerging "enforced drudgery" in the fields, the Burwells' opportunities for "coercion" in naming practices, and the "ever tightening spiral of racism and repression" in Virginia (33, 34, 222). Readers also will be pleased that Walsh grants roughly equal time to discussing work and cultural adaptation.

There is another familiar aspect of this study: the admission of a "persistent vagueness" in scholars' reconstructions of slave culture. Walsh gives us the best possible examination of naming patterns, religion, artifacts, and the demography of birth and family formation. She crafts the material eloquently but admits that, unfortunately, some areas must remain vague. Even after giving us the widest "contested terrain" of evidence available, we cannot be much clearer about how adaptation occurred, how much cultural autonomy existed, and what slaves wanted.

Walsh discovers intriguing twists in the story of Carter's Grove's slaves that modify extant views about the Tidewater. For one, slaves in the Carter's Grove neighborhood were not sold away to other plantations or divided among heirs who might have moved away. Instead, the Burwells entailed slaves to their estates, which helped to prevent the break-up of families and created a persistent and tight-knit community of slaves. Another significant addition to the scholarship involves Carter Burwell's "strategies for forcing new Africans to become productive workers and reconciling them to bondage" (83). These tactics included encouraging family formation by giving nuclear families their own dwellings, keeping the size of slave quarters small enough so that one white overseer could "always . . . be with the people to keep them to their work" (85), and appointing slave foremen with special privileges to set the work pace and teach skills to other slaves.

Whether corroborating with other scholars or striking new ground, Lorena Walsh's contribution is richly textured, and it should help us guide not only archaeologists and historians, but academics and general readers, onto the same page.

CATHY D. MATSON  
*University of Delaware*

*Cause for Alarm: The Volunteer Fire Department in the Nineteenth-Century City.* By Amy S. Greenberg. (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1998. 241 pages. Appendix, notes, index. \$35.00.)

Sound the alarm today and Baltimore fire trucks barrel out of forty-six firehouses and careen forth through seventy or more square miles of city streets. But one century and a half ago when Baltimore was less than one-fifth the size and population, fire departments were even more important. Twenty to thirty engine and hook and ladder companies and volunteer brigades made up of young, white males protected the city until a professional department took their place in the late 1850s.

*Cause for Alarm* studies the firemen in Baltimore, St. Louis, and San Francisco. Data about all three is too densely mixed and too intertwined with the author's extensive exegesis on masculine culture to learn much about Baltimore on a quick read, but the local material is still fascinating. The city's volunteer companies mixed the social classes—they were "never working class" (87)—included foreign- and native-born, and may have hired African Americans. They were also part of the mobs that made up "Mobtown" and indeed were "perhaps the most violent in the nation" (106). Its companies battled each other, not just the fires, and bystanders were in danger of getting caught in the crossfire. Before the city government phased out the volunteer companies, alcohol had to be banned and firemen had to promise not to imbibe at fires. Young boys had to be weeded out from the fraternities of action-prone men who made themselves notorious. Maps and attention to the built environment around fire halls would have added to the detail about big fires, fire halls, and the firemen's social life locally.

The historical literature explains the firemen's violence as part of the working-class nature of the volunteer companies, but the author insists the companies were quite class heterogeneous in the three cities studied. Lawyers to laundry men, and clerks to cooks and carpenters, flocked into the same volunteer companies. Culture and self-perception, Greenberg says, creates class, and with lots of data, she is almost, but not quite entirely, convincing on this point of heterogeneity. "Almost" because mobility among the strata of blue- and white-collar laborers may have been greater than she allows, and one does not see in

these companies many wealthy, powerful elite men. Also, her sources do not inform her what kind of firemen were more loyal and active than others.

The narrow focus of the work leaves one uncertain just how large a role the companies played in their members' lives. The author says the role was very large, but one simply does not know much about groups of men at neighborhoods, taverns, street corners, and at work. But the author is right that there was a vigorous fraternity of men in the volunteer companies where masculine traits were indulged in and celebrated. Men lived in the firehouses, celebrated rituals and conducted parades, and won the regard of the citizenry for their heroism and sacrifice. Fires and fire halls were the setting of male bravado and displays of prowess in an era when fire engines were dragged through city streets by human muscle. The public's regard for firemen changed over time. In the 1820s they were noble, valiant, and dedicated, by the 1850s disorderly, irresponsible, and ineffective. Insurance companies ushered in the professional departments which fought fires as much to protect property as lives. All of this is activity that needs to be remembered and understood and this work contributes considerably.

RODERICK N. RYON  
*Towson University*

*The Baltimore Afro-American, 1892–1950.* By Hayward Farrar. (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1998. 247 pages. Index. \$59.95.)

Although this book encompasses only two hundred pages of text, it is encyclopedic in scope and provides a well-documented history of the editorial policies and politics of the *Baltimore Afro-American*. The author of this book, Hayward Farrar, grew up in Baltimore and was a regular reader of the *Afro*, a black-owned weekly based in that city. He believed that the newspaper served as a voice for the "concerns and desires of a people who would have been voiceless" without it. This work, an expansion of Farrar's doctoral thesis completed under the direction of eminent historian John Hope Franklin, demonstrates the way in which the *Afro* led campaigns for freedom and dignity for African-Americans locally, nationally, and internationally.

Farrar examined some of the newspaper's scant archival records as well as related manuscripts in the Baltimore Circuit Court and the Library of Congress, including records of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and the National Urban League. He also used the papers of Booker T. Washington. The author's primary focus, however, was on the newspaper itself. He explains in "A Note on Sources" that most of the information in the book came from an "examination of every edition of the *Afro-American* from 1892 to 1950."

In the introduction and first chapter Farrar provides the reader with a business history of the *Afro*, its founding in 1892, and its development up to 1950. He covers the work of the newspaper's founders, emphasizing the role of John Murphy, an *Afro* employee, who bought the paper for two hundred dollars in 1897 and led it to unprecedented heights until his death in 1922. The paper, which has remained in the hands of Murphy's descendants, continued to prosper even during the Great Depression.

Although branch offices of the *Afro* are mentioned from time to time in the text, Farrar focuses on the editorial campaigns of the Baltimore newspaper. The second through the ninth chapters describe some of the major crusades waged by the *Afro*'s editor's and reporters, such as desegregation and civil rights. The newspaper's educational campaigns, discussed in chapter two were designed to increase educational opportunities for African-American students by arguing for better accommodations. The editors also fought for an increased number of black teachers, administrators and school board members, academic and vocational training, and improved access to higher education. The newspaper covered social and political activities at Howard University in Washington, D.C. and at Fisk University in Nashville, as well as other historically black colleges and universities.

The development of Morgan State University in Baltimore from a denominational seminary to a college and finally to a state-sponsored institution, was closely covered by the *Afro*, especially when Carl Murphy was on the institution's Board of Regents. The newspaper monitored and encouraged the legal battles and political maneuverings of the NAACP in its battles for equal school facilities and school desegregation at all levels including colleges, universities, and professional schools. Extensive coverage of the NAACP's successful efforts to desegregate the University of Maryland Law School demonstrated the *Afro*'s solidarity with that campaign.

Chapter 3, "Failure, Futility, and Frustration: The *Afro-American* as a Political Force," relates the newspaper's successful crusades against disenfranchisement of black Marylanders, the paper's efforts to spur voter registration, and their often futile hopes that endorsements of political candidates on the local, state, and national levels would result in greater benefits for African-Americans. The newspaper set itself up as a watchdog over the racial policies and membership of the Baltimore City Council and analyzed Maryland state legislation concerning African Americans. Chapter 4 relates the *Afro*'s efforts to move government and business owners to provide better employment, entrepreneurial, and housing opportunities for blacks, while chapter 5 reflects the newspaper's outcries against inequities and abuses in the local and national criminal justice systems. Chapter 6 addresses the *Afro*'s efforts to promote "middle class values among its readers through moralistic editorials" and "uplifting feature stories."

The author does argue, however, that these moralistic preachers were diluted somewhat by the sensational headlines and gruesome news coverage the *Afro* used regularly to attract and hold its readership.

The philosophical debates between African-American leaders Booker T. Washington, William E. B. Du Bois, Marcus Garvey, and the black community's attraction to communism are the subjects of chapter 7. This sixteen-page chapter provides barely enough space for the coverage of such broad topics, but Farrar ably shows that the *Afro*'s editorial writers and owners were primarily concerned with what, in their opinion, was best for the African-American community. They supported aspects of the work of Washington, Dubois, Garvey, and communist groups in whichever of their policies called for the economic, social, and political betterment of blacks. Although the newspaper certainly did not agree with every aspect of these movements and eventually turned away from Garvey altogether, its editorials demonstrated a willingness to explore a variety of strategies for securing the equality of African Americans. Chapter 8 covers the World Wars, chapter 9 follows and encourages the civil rights crusades up to 1950, and the epilog provides information about the aggressive editorial leadership by the *Afro* in the civil rights movement during the years beyond 1950.

Farrar's book provides an excellent synopsis of the Baltimore *Afro-American* as a black-owned business, a community advocate, and a forum for the voiceless. Clearly, the *Afro* has provided a clarion call for justice and equality for African-Americans not only in Baltimore but throughout the United States. Because Farrar's topic is so broad—sixty years of editorial analysis—there are obviously enough topics covered for each chapter to evolve into a complete book. Very important developments in the African-American community are discussed only briefly because of the extensive scope of this work. Thus the research-hungry student will find much fodder for further study in these pages. Each chapter is of equal interest although some are more local than national in scope. The author maintains his objectivity and attempts to carefully document each statement he makes. (The chapters average about seventy footnotes each.) In addition to being interesting and analytical this work demonstrates that the owners and editorial writers maintained a gadfly mentality in order to provoke the African-American intelligentsia, as well as the working class, in their relentless quest for full citizenship in their state and nation.

DEBRA NEWMAN HAM  
Morgan State University

*American Mobbing, 1828–1861: Toward Civil War.* By David Grimsted. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998. 392 pages. Notes, index. \$65.00.)

"Violence," the civil rights leader H. Rap Brown once declared, "is as Ameri-

can as apple pie." Most twentieth-century Americans would concede the point for their times, reserving for the nineteenth century its nostalgic reputation as a kinder, gentler age. (As state-sanctioned violence, the Civil War never figures in these calculations.) But after reading David Grimsted's exhaustive examination of our national proclivity for physical force *American Mobbing, 1828–1861: Toward Civil War*, no American will be able to exempt our Victorian age—our supposed age of gentility and mannerly behavior—from Brown's cynical understanding that we are a violent intemperate people.

In the first of two proposed volumes on nineteenth-century riots, Grimsted focuses on those mob actions that are related to slavery, "the nation's deepest and most divisive anomaly" (ix). He defines as mobbing "Incidents where six or more people band together to enforce their will publicly by threatening or perpetuating physical injury to persons extra-legally, ostensibly to correct problems or injustices within their society without changing its basic structures" (xii). Grimsted fineses the popular sociological measures of the spontaneity of the crowd, and he is even-handed in his presumption that all riots—the good and the bad from John Brown to John Booth, the ones we would support and the ones we would decry—deserve inclusion.

Subjecting 742 riots of his astonishing aggregate of 1,218 for investigation as those related to slavery, Grimsted charts a careful map of American mobbing. Riots are counted, described, classified, arranged by topic chronologically and sectionally, and evaluated for their meaning. From such careful historical research emerge new understandings not just of the specifics and the often horrifying brutality of these riots, but also of the centrality of five forms of antebellum mobbing. There are riots against abolitionists and to aid fugitive slaves in the North, riots to silence opposition to slavery and to control fantasized insurrections in the South, and finally political riots throughout the nation during the Second Party System and the nativist period, the latter familiar to Marylanders as their special heritage.

Grimsted's reach is wide, and his findings speak to larger issues in our past. Along the way some of the signature events of American history are reevaluated. For example, seen from the perspective of rioting, the outcome of "Bleeding Kansas" had more to do with what Grimsted renames as "Bleeding Majoritarianism" and the refusal of northerners to be denied what they considered basic American values of fair play and free elections as it did national legislation in the form of the English bill. And in his analysis of the difference between northern and southern mobbing, Grimsted provides evidence for the continuing argument over the degree of dissimilarity between antebellum northerners and southerners. Grimsted convincingly demonstrates that the system of slavery with its glorification of mastery and its system of personal violence underwrote mob actions in the South that were much less likely to involve any intervention by

legal authorities than those in the North. Southern mobbing was more personalized, less likely to involve property (save to the degree that slaves were property) and more sadistic.

Grimsted's intention is to show how American mobbing North and South led to the Civil War, and such a proposition requires some attention to national politics. Here committing the social scientist's error of selecting on the dependent variable—in common parlance “if you have a hammer everything looks like a nail—,” Grimsted stretches too far. Nativists are denied their agency and are interpreted as using their anti-immigrant and Catholic positions to hide from the divisive issues associated with slavery. Yet on the issue of political nativism, Grimsted provides those Marylanders who would point the finger of mob violence at the Know-Nothings with a significant corrective. Democrats rioted as much as Know-Nothings, only they got to write the reports of the violence afterwards and left themselves out of such undemocratic behavior.

Perhaps it is this latter point writ large that explains why as a nation we have known so little about nineteenth-century mobbing. Believers in our exceptionalism, we have written our own history, and we have generally omitted unseemly stories of violence. In the future such selective exclusions will be impossible, and this is the great contribution of Grimsted's important study.

JEAN H. BAKER  
Goucher College

*The Burning of Washington: The British Invasion of 1814.* By Anthony S. Pitch. (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1998. 304 pages. Maps, photographs, notes, bibliography, index. \$32.95)

In this singular but very impressive volume, Anthony S. Pitch presents a review of the British invasion of our nation's capitol during the War of 1812 and the military events that occurred in and around Baltimore. His vast experience as a writer and journalist is clearly evident as he masterfully weaves the fabric that interlocks historical events surrounding the war with the ever present human elements often overlooked by others in the field. Historians record who won the war; genealogists record who paid the price. Pitch has combined these tenets and added to them his skillful interpretation of primary source documents and information uncovered in letters, diaries, and newspapers of the time. His attention to detail is prevalent throughout this book. His vivid accounting of the events and occurrences before, during, and after the burning of Washington makes us feel like we are eyewitnesses to all that transpired.

The seventeen chapters, plus epilogue, are presented chronologically. From the early stages of the war at the Battle of Bladensburg to the burning of Washington, from the Battle of North Point to the attack on Fort McHenry in Balti-

more, and then finally to the birth of our national anthem, you really think you are there. This book is like what Francis Scott Key's associate John Skinner said about his newly penned poem after the bombardment of Fort McHenry, which was, "it perfectly describes the period of anxiety to all, but never of despair." Thus, in a larger sense, the entire war effort was just that way, I do believe, and Pitch has masterfully written about it in that fashion in his book.

In your mind's eye you can visualize the horrid events of the war, but in your heart you actually and truly feel sympathy and compassion for the plight of the soldiers and citizens under those chaotic circumstances. Many had fought, persevered, and won over the British in the Revolutionary War just thirty years earlier. Now, like the epic *Gone With the Wind* that centered on the Civil War some fifty years later, Pitch's book is no less dramatic, and equally significant, as you are swept along through the trials and tribulations of the times, thankful for the victory that followed the war and the rebuilding of a nation, and its capitol, once again.

Such is the value of Mr. Pitch's book. It not only reaches out to readers in general, but primarily because it is important to the social and military history of Maryland. In that regard, it is a significant contribution to the chronicles of American history. I highly recommend it.

HENRY C. PEDEN, JR.  
*Bel Air*

*Southern Cross: The Beginnings of the Bible Belt.* By Christine Leigh Heyrman. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997. 352 pages. Notes, appendix, index. \$16.95 paper.)

It is an old and familiar image: the Bible-pounding rural evangelist exhorting rapt listeners to repent or face damnation. In the eighteenth century George Whitehead brought his charismatic oratory to the colonies. Following behind him, in the revivalism of the Second Great Awakening, Charles Grandison Finney burned through western New York, with fire, brimstone, and the "language of Canaan." And in the early decades of the twentieth century, the oratory of such charismatic speakers as Aimee Semple McPherson moved masses to tears and repentance. Yet contrary to this enduring stereotype, the acceptance of evangelism in rural America was by no means rapid or inevitable.

In fact, in the American South of the late eighteenth century, Christine Heyrman finds that the portion of the population that resisted evangelical fervor was substantial. Evangelical preachers in the pre-Revolutionary years enjoyed a chilly welcome in Anglican counties. And in fact, the majority of southerners were hostile to evangelicalism until "well into the nineteenth cen-

tury," and it was not until the 1830s that evangelicalism exceeded half of the South's white adult population (5).

Heyrman limns several reasons for the resistance. First, many colonists were satisfied with the Church of England and its attendant nod to social hierarchy and deference to the elite. Second, many residents were threatened by a widespread perception that Baptists and Methodists sought to challenge those hierarchies by which communities structured their society and households. As recorded in journals, letters, and other first-hand accounts, evangelicals were perceived as challenging "the deference of youth to age," of children and women to fathers and husbands, and of yeoman to elite (26).

Third, Baptist and Methodist restrictions on recreational activity also drew suspicion. By censuring such commonplace activities as drinking, gambling, and dancing, evangelicalism removed individuals from the community, and thus from the social mainstream. Additionally, many southerners were alarmed by the intimacy of evangelical worship, and its apparent lack of reserve, viewing conversion and religious enthusiasm as an unmanly loss of honor and "self-mastery" (212).

But Heyrman observes a change in evangelicalism after the Revolution. Evangelicals came to realize that their stridency had branded them as odd, and began to modify their approaches to the ministry. "As a result," the author notes, "evangelicalism looked much different in the 1830s than it had in the 1790s, and far different than it had been in the 1760s" (26). This new generation was not seeking to upset the status quo: they sought instead to reassure the white men that their patriarchal and racial authority would not be challenged; they could retain dominance of their households. Most importantly, evangelists now muted their condemnation of slavery. Among Baptists, for example, slave holders were never decisively barred from church membership.

The evangelical leaders changed, and with them, the language of Canaan. The new generation of preachers upheld the ideals of southern manhood. Their rhetoric now addressed the southern "manliness" of the ministry, and stressed that real men can embrace the faith without sacrificing their masculinity. This new breed, Heyrman observes, used combative, military rhetoric and images, and "identified spreading the gospel as a kind of spiritualized form of aggression" (234). They were "preacher-hunters," and used images of the hunt in their sermons (235). One particularly dramatic example of this new breed of "warrior preacher" was Peter Cartwright, ever-ready to enlist his pugilistic skills as well as his oratory to settle a score in the name of righteousness.

For her documentation, Heyrman draws upon contemporary correspondence, and the memoirs and journals of evangelical preachers, but also Methodist, Baptist, and Presbyterian church histories. Most notable is Heyrman's

annotated bibliography, an engaging and informed commentary on the scholarship of the early history of evangelicals in the South.

But Heyrman's compass is much broader than that of a strict religious historian. Nor, in keeping with much of the research produced in the past twenty-five years, is she a consensus historian. In the long-standing debate among historians of early America regarding the nature of the transition from a rural agrarian culture to a post-Revolutionary capitalist society (here over-simplified as the "consensus versus conflict" debate), her approach is situated in that of the latter. If consensus historians of the South focused on elite leaders, portraying the early National period as one of individualism and equal opportunity, so-called "conflict" historians have tended to focus instead on the less-exalted classes. And their studies of the daily lives of women, African-Americans, and the upcountry yeoman farmer have greatly enriched the field of American history. Heyrman's contribution is to show how these rural Southerners distrusted the early changes manifested by changing social relations, such as the erosion of domestic authority.

The author acknowledges that there is little agreement among historians about how to characterize the Baptists and the Methodists, particularly as to whether they were populist in nature. Challenging such historians as Nathan Hatch, Heyrman argues that this evangelicalism was not a democratizing movement. For that reason, she hesitates to cast early national Baptists or Methodists as being any more egalitarian than the wary un-churched.

Heyrman's text is not for the casual reader browsing the shelves at Borders. Nor is it for the seeker of institutional religious history. Instead, *Southern Cross* is a masterly study combining meticulous scholarship, thoughtful argument, and informed story-telling. Heyrman brings literary wit and grace to her subject, and students and scholars of the early National period and the antebellum South will be well-rewarded by this engaging text.

DONNA BLAIR SHEAR  
*Maryland Historical Society*

*Necessary Virtue: The Pragmatic Origins of Religious Liberty in New England.* By Charles P. Hanson. (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1998. 287 pages. Notes, bibliography, index. \$35.)

Charles P. Hanson's *Necessary Virtues: The Pragmatic Origins of Religious Liberty in New England* represents the second book-length study in recent years to examine the shifting attitudes of New Englanders toward the Catholic Church during the Revolutionary era. Both Hanson's narrative and Francis D. Cogliano's *No King, No Popery: Anti-Catholicism in Revolutionary New England* (*Contributions in American History*, Number 164. Westport: Greenwood Press, 1995)

question how New Englanders came to modify their long-standing opposition to Catholicism in order to accept wartime alliances with Catholic Quebec and France, and ask whether this tempered stance led to religious toleration in the region. Complementing and expanding upon Cogliano's discussion of the distinctions between elite and popular anti-popery and the varied means used by the Whig elite to shape public opinion, Hanson considers anti-Catholicism in the context of wartime and postwar religious politics in New England. In the process, he detects a "deep strain of pragmatism" (4) in the patriots' approach to the Catholic Question and in their recasting of Catholicism in terms that could square with Revolutionary ideology. While creating room for religious toleration, this accommodation to Catholicism also threatened the providential narrative of the Revolution and the authority of the Congregationalist Standing Order. But these threats proved temporary, leading Hanson to conclude that "sheer contingency" (4) played a definitive role in the origins of American religious freedom.

Hanson opens his story of "theological elasticity" (58) with a detailed sketch of the 1775 American invasion of Quebec, an unsuccessful venture that has attracted little scholarly attention. Hanson's amplified account considers reactions to the invasion from multiple vantage points, including those of the French Canadians themselves. A wide range of sources, including correspondence and soldiers' diaries, suggest that the traditional rhetoric of religious warfare that characterized previous Quebec–New England conflicts was all but replaced by discourse that revealed a social and ethnic divide splitting the habitants from their priests and the elite.

The absence of anti-Catholic invective during the invasion leads Hanson to double back and examine the public response to the Quebec Act of 1774, in which Parliament officially recognized the Catholic church in Quebec. Here he finds the first signs of a softening in the American position vis-à-vis Catholicism: in order to justify the idea of political union with Quebec, the American rebels were forced to reinvent their French Canadian enemies as harmless. They skirted the issue of religion altogether, representing the Quebecois as pliant and educable to the ideals of republican government and further emphasizing their small numbers—a population of only 90,000 could be perceived as posing little risk to two million Americans.

Out of this rhetorical maneuvering came a divide within the Revolutionary movement itself, pitting enlightenment and religious toleration against religious faith and authority. This divide would become more critical as patriots campaigned to promote its 1778 military alliance with Catholic France, forcing the Congregationalist clergy to reconcile the alliance with Protestant values. Significantly complicating this discussion was the British claim on religious toleration because of their passage of the Quebec Act even while American Tories

disavowed any interest in religious toleration and likened patriots to papists. Popular reception of the alliance in New England also depended on overcoming preconceived notions of French morality and other cultural differences. In short, American support for the alliance in New England, as with the Quebec Act, required that a new identity be created for French Catholics. Based on an extensive survey of New England newspapers and almanacs, Hanson offers a complex discussion of the secular arguments used to blunt the menace that the French alliance seemed to pose. Namely, patriotic propaganda managed to divorce Catholicism from Frenchness and to redirect anti-Catholic feeling toward the British.

Because it challenged the traditional Calvinist view, this new image of the French and Catholicism produced a flurry of arguments within the Congregationalist community over what constituted religious orthodoxy versus heresy, with opponents of the alliance charging supporters with religious expediency. Ultimately at issue was whether religious toleration was intrinsically progressive or would endanger religion by producing apathy. The Catholic Question maintained its potency into the postwar period as seen in the dispute between Congregationalists and Universalists in which each group launched the rhetoric of anti-Catholicism at the other in order to assert the vitality of conservative Calvinism or the virtues of liberal Protestantism. As Hanson argues, wartime propaganda so confused the traditional definitions of Catholicism that it created a “semantic vacuum” (171) in which a diversity of religious opinions could circulate. Although he submits that “the impersonation of liberality is after all a step toward its establishment” (191), Hanson is careful to point out that anti-Catholicism was not eradicated and that religious toleration did not ensue at the level of constitutional politics until decades later. Moreover, the French Revolution revived the religious discourse on Catholicism. Hanson closes with an insightful comparison of how three Calvinists—Ezra Stiles, Timothy Dwight, and John Leland—reconsidered the Catholic alliances in the postwar years and in the process created a “usable past” that spoke to their political affiliations as well as their religious values.

Tackling previously unexamined events in religious and Revolutionary history, this slim volume contains an account of considerable complexity and depth in which the intertwining of religion and politics is amply illustrated. Meticulous research clearly undergirds Hanson’s work and his findings are elaborated in detail—at times to the point of taxing the reader’s interest. Similarly, Hanson’s liberal quotation from primary sources generally animates the narrative but more often is excessive, interrupting the flow of the book when paraphrasing would have sufficed. In short, a general reading audience may find the book slow going. Even specialists in religious or Revolutionary history might be disappointed that Hanson has chosen to address the link between Catholicism and religious liberty solely in the context of New England; the condition of Catholi-

cism in Maryland and Pennsylvania, for example, earns only a passing mention. Hampered by this regional scope, Hanson is unable to fully meet his aim of presenting more than “a Congregationalist version of Revolutionary history” (18). These minor weaknesses aside, *Necessary Virtue* is a perceptive work that has added welcome nuance to our understanding of the origins of religious toleration in New England.

ANN KIRSCHNER

*University of Delaware*

## Books in Brief

An 1890 act of Congress established the Antietam Battlefield Board for the purpose of surveying, locating, and preserving the battle lines of the Army of the Potomac and the Army of Northern Virginia. The board also acquired land for marking the position of the Union and Confederate commands. In *Battle of Antietam: The Official History of the Maryland Campaign of 1862 by the Antietam Battlefield Board*, authors George R. Large and Joe A. Swisher compiled information on all of the cast iron markers erected by the board. They present this information with an overview of the battle. The volume includes battle diagrams and maps showing the locations of the tablets.

Burd Street Press, \$14.95, paper

Civil War guidebooks line the shelves of local bookstores, libraries, and national park gift shops in record numbers. Susan Cooke Soderberg's *A Guide to Civil War Sites in Maryland: Blue and Gray in a Border State* is a comprehensive and detailed aid to Maryland's Civil War history. More than 200 sites are identified with accompanying maps and directions for walking and driving tours. The work includes photographs, an index, and an appendix of more than ninety short biographies of Civil War Marylanders.

White Mane Books, \$19.95, paper

Peter Charles Hoffer explains how law pervaded the everyday lives of colonial Americans in this revised edition of *Law and People in Colonial America*. First published in 1992, the new volume addresses recent scholarship and offers a fresh look at the legal experiences of American Indians, Spaniards, and the French as people on the edges of English settlement. Hoffer examines how English law dealt with neighboring societies and how the colonists adapted the law to fit their changing needs and circumstances. In the midst of a war for independence, American revolutionaries labored to explain how their rebellion could be lawful, while legislators wrote republican constitutions that would endure for centuries.

The Johns Hopkins University Press, \$14.95, paper

P.D.A.

# Notices

## Maryland Historical Society Book Award

The MHS will award a \$1,000 prize for the best book on Maryland history published in 1997 or 1998. Authors and publishers are invited to submit their works by June 15, 1999. Entries will be judged by the Publications Committee. Please send three copies of the book to the Publications Division, Maryland Historical Society, 201 W. Monument Street, Baltimore, MD, 21201. For information call 410-685-3750, x317.

## Publications Contest Announced

The Southern Association for Women Historians has announced its 1999 publications prizes: the Julia Cherry Spruill Publication Prize for the best book published in southern women's history and the Willie Lee Rose Publication Prize for the best book in southern history authored by a woman. The deadline for both competitions is April 1 and entries are open to authors who published books in 1998. The association is also sponsoring the A. Elizabeth Taylor Prize for the best article in southern women's history. The deadline for this judging is June 1, 1999. For further information, contact Michele Gillespie, Secretary SAWH, Department of History, Agnes Scott College, Decatur GA 30030-3797, or call 404-471-6214.

## Maryland History Day Competition

Maryland students in grades six through twelve are invited to enter original papers, documentaries, exhibits, and dramatic performances in the annual History Day competition. This year's theme is "Science, Technology, and Invention in History: Impact, Influence, and Change." Dates and locations for the regional competitions are: Western Maryland History Day, March 6, Frostburg State University and Central Maryland History Day, March 14, University of Baltimore. County competitions are scheduled for March 13 in Prince George's County and March 19-21 in Calvert County. The state competition, Maryland History Day, will be held April 17 at the University of Baltimore, and National History Day June 13-17 at the University of Maryland, College Park. For further information contact, Rachel Brubaker, Maryland State Coordinator, University of Maryland, Baltimore, 410-837-5296.

P.D.A.

## Maryland Picture Puzzle

Challenge your knowledge of western Maryland history by identifying this 1895 street scene from our collections. Our congratulations to William Hollifield, Raymond and Percy Martin, and Sara Stanton Jarrett, who correctly identified the Fall Picture Puzzle. The building pictured in a 1910 photograph is Cassellman's Hotel, Grantsville, Garrett County.



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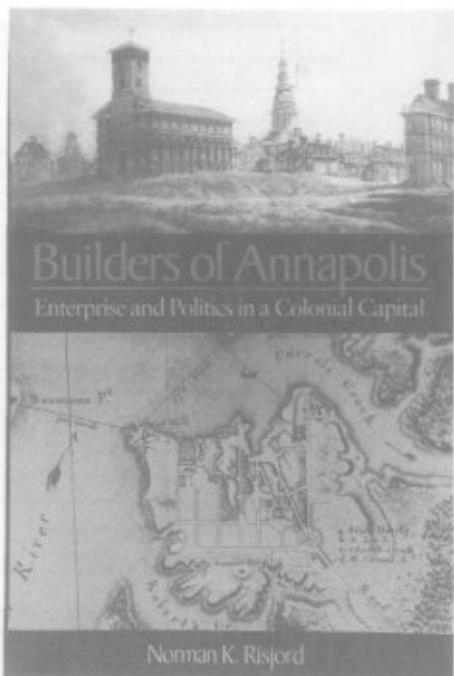
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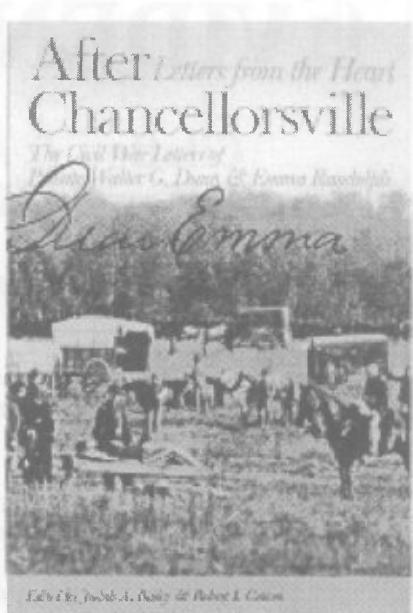
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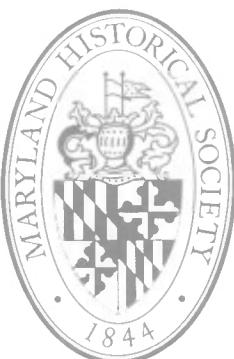
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